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# Hearing *Kyriotic* Sonship

*A Cognitive and Rhetorical Approach to the  
Characterization of Mark's Jesus*

By

Michael R. Whitenton



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*For Rachel*





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## Preface

This monograph may bear my name, but many are responsible for the volume you now hold in your hands. Faculty, friends, and family have collectively molded me into the person and scholar I am today and encouraged me to set no limits on what I could achieve. Kelly Iverson is both a friend and mentor; he was patient far beyond measure, reading, commenting, rereading, and commenting again on the pages of the original dissertation version of this monograph. His enthusiasm for interdisciplinary approaches provided space for me to find my own voice and speak with it in (hopefully) fruitful ways. Beyond scholarship, his concern for me and my family at the near simultaneous losses of my mother and our first pregnancy were more than I could have possibly imagined. Bruce Longenecker taught me to relax, read creatively, make an argument, and let the chips fall where they may. He also introduced me to the lost-but-found worlds of Pompei and Herculaneum. Lidija Novakovic taught me to read the Jewish scriptures in ways that are sensitive to Jewish hermeneutical practice and remain aware of the ever-present specter of Christian influence on Jewish categories, like “son of David.” Finally, for those with eyes to see, the influence of Mikeal Parsons may be seen on every page that follows (even those upon which he finds points of disagreement!). His interest in, and careful reading of, the *progymnasmata* and the rhetorical handbooks, introduced to me in his “Rhetoric of the Passion Narratives” seminar in my first semester at Baylor, set me on a path that would ultimately lead me here. Over the years, he has provided constructive criticism and consistent support in more ways that I can remember or will likely ever come to know. I also remain grateful to David Garland, Beverly Gaventa, and Charles Weaver, each of whom contributed helpful and important feedback on earlier versions and sections of this project. My colleagues during my studies at Baylor—especially Brian Gamel, David Beary, Heather Gorman, Justin King, Scott Ryan, Lindsey Trozzo, and Nick Zola—made doctoral work a joy. Some of you were there for me in some of life’s darkest times; you have taught me that the distinction between colleagues, friends, and family can be very thin indeed. I also wish to thank Paul Anderson and the anonymous reviewer for the Biblical Interpretation Series. Their comments and suggestions stimulated subtle but significant improvements to the final draft. In addition, Liesbeth Hugenholtz and Maaïke Langerak have been positively wonderful to work with at Brill, laboring behind the scenes to bring this manuscript to life in published form.

Still, my greatest debt is reserved for my family. My parents raised me to believe I could do anything I set my mind to. Moreover, if my mother had not

ensured I received the academic support I needed when I was in third grade, I would not be writing this today. It is one of my deepest sorrows that they did not live to read the words that follow. They were always my greatest supporters, and I miss them everyday. In their absence, my parents-in-law have loved me as their own son. What more could someone ask for?

To my daughter, Felicity Marie, we found out you were on the way just days before my defense; you are better than all books and articles in the world. I hope you always know that I would rather be with you. And to Rachel, my partner for life, without your support this project would have been neither possible nor worth undertaking. You alone know me fully, along with spectrum of emotions that has accompanied these past years. It is to you that I lovingly dedicate this book.

Michael R. Whitenton  
Waco, TX

# Abbreviations

|         |                                                                                                                                                                         |
|---------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ANRW    | <i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i>                                                                                                                       |
| ANTC    | Abingdon New Testament Commentaries                                                                                                                                     |
| AB      | Anchor Bible                                                                                                                                                            |
| ABD     | <i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . Edited by D. N. Freedman. 6 vols. New York, 1992                                                                                       |
| ABRL    | Anchor Bible Reference Library                                                                                                                                          |
| AGJU    | Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums                                                                                                    |
| AJP     | <i>American Journal of Philology</i>                                                                                                                                    |
| AnBib   | Analecta biblica                                                                                                                                                        |
| BAR     | <i>Biblical Archaeology Review</i>                                                                                                                                      |
| BBB     | Bonner biblische Beiträge                                                                                                                                               |
| BBR     | <i>Bulletin for Biblical Research</i>                                                                                                                                   |
| BBS     | <i>Behavioral and Brain Sciences</i>                                                                                                                                    |
| BDAG    | Bauer, W., F. W. Danker, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich. <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . 3d ed. Chicago, 1999 |
| BETL    | Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologiarum lovaniensium                                                                                                                       |
| Bib     | <i>Biblica</i>                                                                                                                                                          |
| BibInt  | <i>Biblical Interpretation</i>                                                                                                                                          |
| BibS(N) | Biblische Studien (Neukirchen, 1951–)                                                                                                                                   |
| BIS     | Biblical Interpretation Series                                                                                                                                          |
| BJP     | <i>British Journal of Psychology</i>                                                                                                                                    |
| BNTC    | Black's New Testament Commentaries                                                                                                                                      |
| BPC     | Biblical Performance Criticism                                                                                                                                          |
| BR      | <i>Biblical Research</i>                                                                                                                                                |
| BTB     | <i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>                                                                                                                                       |
| BZNW    | Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft                                                                                                         |
| CBQ     | <i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>                                                                                                                                      |
| CBQMS   | Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series                                                                                                                            |
| CBR     | <i>Currents in Biblical Research</i>                                                                                                                                    |
| ClAnt   | <i>Classical Antiquity</i>                                                                                                                                              |
| CJ      | <i>Classical Journal</i>                                                                                                                                                |
| CP      | <i>Classical Philology</i>                                                                                                                                              |
| CQ      | <i>Classical Quarterly</i>                                                                                                                                              |
| CTQ     | <i>Concordia Theological Quarterly</i>                                                                                                                                  |

|                |                                                                                                      |
|----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>CW</i>      | <i>Classical World</i>                                                                               |
| <i>EBib</i>    | <i>Études Bibliques</i>                                                                              |
| EKKN           | Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament                                               |
| <i>EMH</i>     | <i>Early Music History</i>                                                                           |
| EUSS           | European University Studies Series                                                                   |
| FB             | Forschung zur Bibel                                                                                  |
| FRLANT         | Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments                                |
| <i>GRBS</i>    | <i>Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies</i>                                                            |
| <i>HBT</i>     | <i>Horizons in Biblical Theology</i>                                                                 |
| HNT            | Handbuch zum Neuen Testament                                                                         |
| <i>HSCPh</i>   | <i>Harvard Studies in Classical Philology</i>                                                        |
| <i>HTR</i>     | <i>Harvard Theological Review</i>                                                                    |
| HTS            | Harvard Theological Studies                                                                          |
| <i>HUCA</i>    | <i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>                                                                   |
| HUT            | Hermeneutische Untersuchungen zur Theologie                                                          |
| ICC            | International Critical Commentary                                                                    |
| <i>IDB</i>     | <i>The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i> . Edited by G. A. Buttrick. 4 vols. Nashville, 1962 |
| <i>IJPsych</i> | <i>International Journal of Psychology</i>                                                           |
| <i>IBS</i>     | <i>Irish Biblical Studies</i>                                                                        |
| <i>JBL</i>     | <i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>                                                                |
| <i>JEP</i>     | <i>Journal of Experimental Psychology</i>                                                            |
| <i>JETS</i>    | <i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>                                                |
| <i>JFSR</i>    | <i>Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion</i>                                                       |
| <i>JGRCJ</i>   | <i>Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism</i>                                               |
| <i>JR</i>      | <i>Journal of Religion</i>                                                                           |
| <i>JSNT</i>    | <i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>                                                    |
| JSNTSup        | Journal for the Study of the New Testament: Supplement Series                                        |
| JSOT           | <i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>                                                    |
| JSPSup         | Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha: Supplement Series                                       |
| <i>JTI</i>     | <i>Journal of Theological Interpretation</i>                                                         |
| <i>JTS</i>     | <i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>                                                                |
| <i>JTSB</i>    | <i>Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour</i>                                                    |
| KEK            | Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament (Meyer-Kommentar)                            |
| LCL            | Loeb Classical Library                                                                               |
| LNTS           | Library of New Testament Studies                                                                     |
| <i>MD</i>      | <i>Materiali e discussioni per l'analisi dei testi classici</i>                                      |
| <i>Neot</i>    | <i>Neotestamentica</i>                                                                               |
| NCB            | New Century Bible                                                                                    |

|              |                                                                                                    |
|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| NICNT        | New International Commentary on the New Testament                                                  |
| NIGTC        | New International Greek Testament Commentary                                                       |
| <i>NovT</i>  | <i>Novum Testamentum</i>                                                                           |
| NRSV         | New Revised Standard Version                                                                       |
| NTD          | Das Neue Testament Deutsch                                                                         |
| NTL          | New Testament Library                                                                              |
| NTM          | New Testament Monographs                                                                           |
| NTOA         | Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus                                                                |
| <i>NTS</i>   | <i>New Testament Studies</i>                                                                       |
| NovTSup      | Supplements to Novum Testamentum                                                                   |
| <i> OCD</i>  | <i>Oxford Classical Dictionary</i> . Edited by S. Hornblower and A. Spawforth. 3d ed. Oxford, 1996 |
| <i>Phil</i>  | <i>Philologus</i>                                                                                  |
| PNCT         | Pelican New Testament Commentaries                                                                 |
| Psychol Rev  | Psychological Review                                                                               |
| <i>RhetR</i> | <i>Rhetoric Review</i>                                                                             |
| RNS          | Recherches Nouvelle Série                                                                          |
| SAC          | Studies in Antiquity and Christianity                                                              |
| <i>SEÅ</i>   | <i>Svensk exegetisk årsbok</i>                                                                     |
| SBLDS        | Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series                                                 |
| SBLECJ       | Society of Biblical Literature Early Christianity and Its Literature                               |
| SBLEJL       | Society of Biblical Literature Early Judaism and Its Literature                                    |
| SBLSymS      | Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series                                                    |
| SBS          | Stuttgarter Bibelstudien                                                                           |
| SemeiaSt     | Semeia Studies.                                                                                    |
| SHR          | Studies in the History of Religions (supplement to <i>Numen</i> )                                  |
| SNTSMS       | Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series                                                 |
| SP           | Sacra pagina                                                                                       |
| <i>TAPA</i>  | <i>Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association</i>                       |
| <i>ThEv</i>  | <i>Theologia Evangelica</i>                                                                        |
| THKNT        | Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament                                                    |
| <i>TTKi</i>  | <i>Tidsskrift for Teologi Og Kirke</i>                                                             |
| WBC          | Word Biblical Commentary                                                                           |
| <i>WJA</i>   | <i>Würzburger Jahrbücher für die Altertumswissenschaft</i>                                         |
| WSA          | Würzburger Studien zur Altertumswissenschaft                                                       |
| WUNT         | Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament                                               |
| <i>ZTK</i>   | <i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>                                                        |
| <i>ZNW</i>   | <i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche</i>         |



# Introductory Remarks and Assumptions

## Enter the *Kyriotic* Son

According to ancient theorists, the most compelling ancient narratives made some information elusive rather than easily accessible. By keeping some information “in the shadows,” authors and orators alike invited ancient audiences to draw important conclusions on their own. The reason for this less-direct approach is as shrewd as it is obvious. In the words of Demetrius, the hearer who infers meaning is “not just listening to you but he or she becomes your witness” and is thus all the more engaged and inclined toward the arguments and values under consideration (*Eloc.* 222).<sup>1</sup> Given the importance assigned to opacity and ambiguity in antiquity,<sup>2</sup> it is unfortunate that the approaches found among the latest narrative readings of the Gospel of Mark<sup>3</sup>—even those that distinguish between “story” and “discourse”—tend to favor more obvious and direct meanings spelled out by the text.<sup>4</sup> Regrettably, this preference has led to a lack of consideration of the potential for latent, hidden, or less-direct

1 συνεις γάρ τὸ ἐλλειφθὲν ὑπὸ σοῦ οὐκ ἀκροατῆς μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ μάρτυς σου γίνεται, καὶ ἅμα εὐμενέστερος. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are my own.

2 On which, see Chapter Two below.

3 The author of the book is never identified in the text of the Gospel. However, for the sake of simplicity and tradition, I refer to this Gospel variously as “Mark’s Gospel,” “Mark,” etc. without implying anything about the historical author(s) of the Gospel. Likewise, I will refer to the composer of Mark’s Gospel as “the evangelist,” “the author,” or even “Mark,” without suggesting anything about the number of authors, the composition process, or even the gender of the author(s) of the Gospel. For the most recent discussion of the composition of Mark’s Gospel, including the tantalizing, if tenuous, notion that it was composed by a number of storytellers over a period of decades, see Antoinette Clark Wire, *The Case for Mark Composed in Performance* (Eugene, Ore.: Cascade, 2011). Larry Hurtado has recently and forcefully challenged Wire’s general thesis. See Larry W. Hurtado, “Oral Fixation and New Testament Studies? ‘Orality,’ ‘Performance’ and Reading Texts in Early Christianity,” *NTS* 60 (2014): 335. See further W. A. Johnson, “Oral Performance and the Composition of Herodotus’ Histories,” *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 35 (1994): 229–54; Myles McDonnell, “Writing, Copying, and the Autograph Manuscripts in Ancient Rome,” *CQ* 46 (1996): 469–91.

4 For example, most recently, Williams has explicitly eschewed the potential for intentional ambiguity in Mark’s Gospel. See Joel F. Williams, “The Characterization of Jesus as Lord in Mark’s Gospel,” in *Character Studies and the Gospel of Mark*, ed. Christopher W. Skinner and Matthew Ryan Hauge, *LNTS* 483 (London: T&T Clark, 2014), 111–12.

meanings subtly called forth by the text.<sup>5</sup> While the straightforward meaning of a text should not be ignored, neither should those elements left for audience inference, whose presence is only detectable from clues and hints from the rhetoric of the narrative. While the reason for this neglect is difficult to ascertain, the remedy is clear enough: along with the growing interest in recovering the oral/aural context of Mark's Gospel, attention must be paid to the rhetorical theory of that same context—a rhetoric that prized ingenuity, clever word choice, audience engagement, and the like as a means of drawing the audience to infer meaning on their own.

This study offers a reading—or better, a *hearing*—of the portrait of Mark's Jesus from the perspective what might be called an ancient “rhetoric of inference.”<sup>6</sup> This constellation of ancient rhetorical figures and complementary tactics baited audiences into inferring meaning(s) either left omitted or opaque in the speech, epic, or narrative. Since components of the rhetoric of

---

5 See, e.g., Jack Dean Kingsbury, *The Christology of Mark's Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1983); Ole Davidsen, *The Narrative Jesus: A Semiotic Reading of Mark's Gospel* (Aarhus, Denmark: Aarhus University Press, 1993); Edwin K. Broadhead, *Naming Jesus: Titular Christology in the Gospel of Mark*, JSNTSup 175 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999); Jacob Chacko Naluparayil, *The Identity of Jesus in Mark: An Essay on Narrative Christology* (Jerusalem: Franciscan, 2000); Paul Danove, *The Rhetoric of Characterization of God, Jesus and Jesus' Disciples in the Gospel of Mark*, JSNTSup 290 (New York: Continuum, 2005); Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, *Mark's Jesus: Characterization as Narrative Christology* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2009). To be sure, it has not been uncommon to note the enigmatic quality of Mark's Gospel. See, e.g., Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. William R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), 15; Frank Kermode, *The Genesis of Secrecy: On the Interpretation of Narrative* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), 33; Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 55, 135, 234–35; Jerry Camery-Hoggatt, *Irony in Mark's Gospel: Text and Subtext*, SNTSMS 72 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Robert M. Fowler, *Let the Reader Understand: Reader-Response Criticism and the Gospel of Mark* (Harrisburg: Trinity, 1996), 195–227; Petri Merenlahti, *Poetics for the Gospels?: Rethinking Narrative Criticism* (New York: Continuum, 2005), 61–76. However, attention to the rhetoric behind the allusive language of the Gospel has been far less common. Indeed, I am not aware of any such treatment. The closest exception is an article-length treatment of intentional ambiguity on *κύριος* in Mark published in *JSNT* by Daniel Johansson entitled, “*Kýrios* in the Gospel of Mark.” However, Johansson's treatment lacks foundation in (more broadly) ancient rhetorical theory and (more immediately) Mark's rhetorical presentation of Jesus. See Daniel Johansson, “*Kýrios* in the Gospel of Mark,” *JSNT* 33 (2010): 101–24. See below for further remarks on Johansson's work.

6 Throughout this study I will variously refer to the character of Jesus in Mark's Gospel as “Mark's Jesus,” “the Markan Jesus,” and simply “Jesus;” I make no distinction between these names, all of which refer to the protagonist character in Mark's Gospel, rather than the flesh-and-blood Jesus of Nazareth.



inference were so prevalent as to be embedded in everyday expressions,<sup>7</sup> it is necessary to set some parameters for our investigation in order that this single volume study remain just that. To that end, this study focuses on the characterization of Mark's Jesus vis-à-vis David and God.

These two facets of Jesus's characterization in Mark may seem distant at first glance, but they are organically joined by the rhetorical contours of the Gospel itself in a way that assimilates Mark's Jesus to God and David.<sup>8</sup> This idea of assimilation occasioned by rhetorical comparison, or *synkristic* assimilation, is rooted in ancient rhetorical theory, as well as literature contemporaneous to Mark's Gospel. For example, the comparison of Chaereas to Patroclus in Chariton's famous first-century novel leads to the assimilation of the former to the latter (see e.g., *Chaer.* 4.1.3 [cf. *Il.* 23.71]). To be sure, Chaereas should not be equated with Patroclus—to do so would be to miss the point—rather the assimilation of Chaereas to Patroclus told audience members something about the characterization of Chaereas within the narrative itself. It added depth to his characterization by importing aspects of Patroclus's characterization—his renown, prowess, and virility—onto Chaereas and by transporting Chaereas to existing reflection on Patroclus. So it goes with Mark's Jesus in relation to David and God.<sup>9</sup>

In this study, the language of “assimilation” concerning the characterization of Mark's Jesus indicates that the behaviors and qualities of God and David are attributed to him in a way that fundamentally forms the fabric of his character.<sup>10</sup> One might think of this assimilation as encouraging audience

---

7 Indeed, any word that carries two or more meanings could lead hearers to infer a great deal more than was made explicit. On this score, Quintilian (*Inst.* 8.3.86) wrote that “*emphasis* is also found in everyday expressions: ‘Be a man!’ and ‘He is a human being.’ And ‘We must live!’” (*Est in vulgaribus quoque verbis emphasis: virum esse oportet, et homo est ille, et vivendum est.*). That is, a “man” is expected to be courageous, a “human being” is a frail creature, and living is a requisite activity, but one that is to be enjoyed. The author of *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (4.54.67) had similar sentiments: “It will be easy to find [uses of *emphasis*] if we know and pay heed to the double and multiple meanings of words” (*Ea reperientur facile, si noverimus et animum adverterimus verborum ancipites aut multiplices potestates.*). See Chapter Two for a detailed discussion of *emphasis* and other aspects of the rhetoric of inference.

8 On the preference for the terminology of assimilation, See Koen De Temmerman, *Crafting Characters: Heroes and Heroines in the Ancient Greek Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 46–117.

9 See further Chapter Two below.

10 I am not the first one to apply the language of assimilation to Mark's Jesus; Adela Yarbro Collins has likewise found it useful, especially, in her discussions of Mark 6:47–52, when Jesus walks about the sea. Adela Yarbro Collins, “Rulers, Divine Men, and Walking on the Water,” in *Religious Propaganda and Missionary Competition in the New Testament World*,

members to view Mark's Jesus as functionally equivalent to David and God, while not equating them.<sup>11</sup> Ultimately, it will be argued that for many audience members Mark's Jesus is cast as a god-in-disguise, a divine being, who is functionally equivalent to Yahweh in the Markan narrative. Yet it is clear from episodes like Mark 10:17–23 and 12:28–34 that, whatever the functional similarity, Jesus is not ontologically God's equal. Similarly, Mark's Jesus is assimilated to David by virtue of the invocation of schemas and scripts associated with the famous king of Israel and his son, Solomon.<sup>12</sup> This allusive Davidic language is used to cast the Markan Jesus as David's royal and therapeutic son, without also approving of the oft-associated political ramifications along the way.

This study refers to this matrix of assimilation as “*kyriotic* sonship” since the relationship with David implies *sonship*, but in a way that is “*kyriotic*,” or, imbued with divinity, especially the god of Israel (often called κύριος in the LXX).<sup>13</sup> This characterization of Mark's Jesus as the *kyriotic* Son is progressively unveiled through the rhetoric of inference over the course of the entire narrative. Despite its ubiquity, however, this rhetoric has remained thus far unattended by contemporary narrative portraits of Mark's Jesus, even if certain aspects of the resulting characterization (either Davidic or divine) have not been completely ignored.

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ed. Lukas Bormann, Kelly del Del Tredici, and Angela Standhartinger (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 224; idem, *Mark: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 335.

- 11 Two recent studies have argued that the Markan Jesus is included in the “divine identity.” See Daniel Johansson, “Jesus and God in the Gospel of Mark: Unity and Distinction” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 2011); Benjamin Pascut, “Forgiveness and Divine Identity in Judaism and Mk 2:1–12” (Ph.D. diss., University of Cambridge, 2013). I do not find this terminology helpful since it imposes a schema atop Mark that does not, in my view, do justice to the complexity of the characterization of Mark's Jesus in relation to God vis-à-vis David. For an attempt to clarify what is precisely meant by “divine identity,” see the application of social identity theory in Pascut's “Forgiveness.” Regardless of what one decides on notions of “divine identity,” this study frames the question of the relationship between the literary characterization of Mark's Jesus and both God and David.
- 12 On “schemas” and “scripts,” see “The Ancient Mind and Modern Cognitive Science” in Chapter One below.
- 13 I therefore use this term only in the sense that the term κύριος is used for the Messiah (=Jesus) in Mark 12:35–37 in a context that prompts reflection on the nature of his Davidic sonship. So, for example, I am not interested, in this context, in the relationship between the *kyriotic* (divine) dimensions of the sonship of Mark's Jesus and the oppressive system, which Elisabeth Schüssler Fionenza has termed “kyriarchy.” Any perceived similarity on the basis of the shared lexical root is unintended on my part. On “kyriarchy,” see Elisabeth Schüssler Fionenza, *But She Said: Feminist Practices of Biblical Interpretation* (Boston: Beacon, 1993).

Of course, since this characterization is couched in ambiguity, it should not be surprising that the full picture of the *kyriotic* sonship of Mark's Jesus has been overlooked in modern scholarship, which has tended to neglect informed reflection on the relevance of figured speech to Mark's Jesus. Yet this neglect should not be taken as evidence for absence.<sup>14</sup> On the contrary, in Chapters Two to Six, this study hopes to open our eyes to a world of meaning below the surface of the text, a meaning couched in tactics as ancient as the story itself. At this introductory stage, however, the goals are more modest. First, I will offer an overview of the most recent narrative characterizations of Mark's Jesus in relation to this study. Then I will briefly discuss the distinctiveness of the approach of this study and detail its reasoned assumptions concerning the specific performative setting adopted for my reading in Chapters Three to Six. Since issues related to performance<sup>15</sup> and rhetoric are discussed at length in Chapter Two, these topics are broached at this early stage in order to prepare our imaginations for hearing Mark's Jesus in a new yet ancient way.

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14 While this strategy may have “failed” among modern readers—in that they tend to miss it—there is evidence from antiquity that Mark's earliest interpreters did not overlook this subtle approach. It is quite telling (and by no means surprising) that Matthew and Luke both bring Jesus's Davidic status to the fore in their respective portraits. Moreover, they seem to have adopted Mark's penchant for capitalizing on the ambiguity inherent in the term *κύριος* to their advantage. For example, Matthew often makes explicit what is left for inference in Mark's narrative. For example, we shall see that Mark 4:35–41 and 6:45–52 will activate Jewish scripts associated with Yahweh walking upon the seas. In both instances, when Matthew adapts this story, the evangelist has the disciples address Jesus as *κύριος*, thereby making the Markan implicit affirmation an explicit testimony on the part of the disciples (cf. Matt 8:23–27; Matt 14:22–33). In addition, Luke's Gospel presents Jesus as the *κύριος* in a way that joins him to Yahweh. See C. Kavin Rowe, *Early Narrative Christology: The Lord in the Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009). Relatedly, for a treatment of the ways Luke-Acts initially declares, then amplifies, corrects, and redirects Jesus's identity—tactics striking similar to those in Mark—see Beverly Roberts Gaventa, “Learning and Relearning the Identity of Jesus from Luke-Acts,” in *Seeking the Identity of Jesus: A Pilgrimage*, ed. Beverly Roberts Gaventa and Richard B. Hays (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 148–65.

15 Here and throughout I use the term “performance” to refer to any oral delivery of a literary text. As Daniel Nüsselqvist has recently demonstrated, the most common such method was public reading, whereby a lector would read a text aloud for a group with skill and precision. While I do not discount the possibility of ancient performances of Mark's Gospel from memory, the usual method would have been public reading. However, a decision on this matter is unnecessary for the study at hand, which focuses on the common factor of all these methods; namely, that the text was *heard* not *read silently* by the vast majority of those experiencing Mark's Gospel. See Dan Nüsselqvist, *Public Reading in Early Christianity: Lectors, Manuscripts, and Sound in the Oral Delivery of John 1–4*, NovTSup 163 (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 63–118. See further Chapter Two below.

## Situating this Study among Recent Portraits of Mark's Jesus

Discord has ruled the day for the past century of reflection on Mark's Jesus.<sup>16</sup> Up to the 1970s among German,<sup>17</sup> English-speaking,<sup>18</sup> and French<sup>19</sup> scholarship, students of Mark's Gospel typically understood its Jesus as more "divine" than "human." However, since the 1970s, scholars have tended to focus on

- 16 For more thorough discussions of the history of research on the portrait of Jesus in Mark than space allows in the present study, see Jacob Chacko Naluparayil, "Jesus of the Gospel of Mark: Present State of Research," *CurBS* 8 (2000): 191–226; Daniel Johansson, "The Identity of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark: Past and Present Proposals," *CBR* 9 (2011): 364–93. For the most recent survey of characterization more broadly in Mark's Gospel, see Christopher W. Skinner, "The Study of Character(s) in the Gospel of Mark: A Survey of Research from Wrede to the Performance Critics (1901 to 2014)," in *Character Studies and the Gospel of Mark*, ed. Christopher W. Skinner and Matthew Ryan Hauge, LNTS 483 (London: T&T Clark, 2014), 3–34.
- 17 Among German scholarship, see esp. William Wrede, *The Messianic Secret*, trans. J. C. G. Greig (Cambridge: James Clarke, 1971), 73–78; 131; Wilhelm Bousset, *Kyrios Christos: Geschichte des Christusglaubens von den Anfängen des Christentums bis Irenaeus*, 2nd ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), 37; 54–56; 66 n. 1; Martin Dibelius, *From Tradition to Gospel*, trans. Bertram Lee Woolf (London: Ivor Nicholson and Watson, 1935), 93–95; 230; 273–79; 297; Rudolf Bultmann, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, 3rd ed. (Tübingen: Mohr, 1958), 1.130–32; Rudolf Bultmann, *Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition*, 4th ed., *Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments* 29 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1958), 241; 347; Ernst Lohmeyer, *Das Evangelium des Markus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1937), 4; Johannes Schreiber, "Die Christologie des Markusevangeliums," *ZTK* 58 (1961): 173; Ferdinand Hahn, *Christologische Hoheitstitel: ihre Geschichte im frühen Christentum*, *Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments* 83 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1963), 287–319.
- 18 Among English-speaking scholars, see esp. Alfred E. J. Rawlinson, *St. Mark* (London: Methuen, 1925), l–liii; Vincent Taylor, *Gospel According to St. Mark: An Introduction and Commentary* (London: MacMillan, 1952), 121; idem, *The Person of Christ in New Testament Teaching* (London: Macmillan, 1958), 4–9; C. E. B. Cranfield, "Mark, Gospel Of," *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (New York: Abingdon, 1962), 273; T. Alec Burkill, *Mysterious Revelation: An Examination of the Philosophy of St. Mark's Gospel* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1963); Dennis Eric Nineham, *The Gospel of St. Mark*, PNTC (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968), 47–49; Ralph P. Martin, *Mark: Evangelist and Theologian* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1972), 84–139.
- 19 Among French scholarship, see esp. Marie Joseph Lagrange, *Évangile selon saint Marc*, *Études Bibliques* (Paris: Victor Lecoffre, 1910), cxxiv–cxl; Pierre Benoit, "The Divinity of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels," in *Jesus and the Gospel*, vol. 1 (London: Dartman, Longman, and Todd, 1973), 47–48; 62–69; G. Minette de Tillesse, *Le secret messianique dans l'évangile de Marc* (Paris: Cerf, 1968), 362–63.

narrative aspects of Markan christology.<sup>20</sup> More often than not, portraits during this period have conceived of Mark's Jesus in ways that emphasize "human" dimensions of his characterization over the "divine" (e.g., the royal messianic figure<sup>21</sup> or a suffering righteous one<sup>22</sup>). Diversity nevertheless remains, even among these more "human" portraits, and this is especially the case among those who entertain Jesus's relationship to David in Mark.

Though the question is not often entertained, disagreement has nevertheless concentrated around whether or not Mark's Jesus is, in some sense, David's Son. Most recently, Elizabeth Struthers Malbon has argued that the Markan narrative resists the notion that Jesus is the Son of David altogether.<sup>23</sup> Others

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- 20 Most notably, see David Rhoads and Donald Michie, *Mark As Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel*, 1st ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982); Kingsbury, *Christology*; Cilliers Breytenbach, *Nachfolge und Zukunftserwartung nach Markus: eine methodenkritische Studie* (Zürich: Theol. Verl., 1984), e.g., 253–62; Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Conflict in Mark: Jesus, Authorities, Disciples* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989); Edwin K. Broadhead, *Teaching With Authority: Miracles and Christology in the Gospel of Mark*, JSNTSup 74 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1992); Davidsen, *The Narrative Jesus*; Broadhead, *Naming Jesus*; Danove, *Rhetoric of Characterization*; Malbon, *Mark's Jesus*; David Rhoads, Joanna Dewey, and Donald Michie, *Mark As Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel*, 3rd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012). Here and throughout I refer to "christology" (non-capitalized) to refer to the narrative characterization of Jesus, whereas I use "Christology" (capitalized) to refer to refined theological reflection on Jesus within Christian theology. In this project, I am interested in the former rather than the latter.
- 21 See, e.g., Philipp Vielhauer, "Erwägungen zur Christologie des Markusevangeliums," in *Aufsätze zum Neuen Testament* (München: Chr. Kaiser, 1964), 199–215; Donald H. Juel, *Messiah and Temple: The Trial of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark*, SBLDS 31 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1977); Frank J. Matera, *The Kingship of Jesus: Composition and Theology in Mark 15*, SBLDS 66 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1982); Kingsbury, *Christology*; Kingsbury, *Conflict*; Paul J. Achtemeier, "Mark, Gospel of," in *ABD*, vol. 4, 6 vols. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1992), 541–57; Adela Yarbro Collins, "Mark and His Readers: The Son of God among Jews," *HTR* 92.4 (1999): 393–408; idem, "Mark and His Readers: The Son of God among Greeks and Romans," *HTR* 93.2 (2000): 85–100; idem, *Mark*; Donald H. Juel, "The Origin of Mark's Christology," in *Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009), 449–60.
- 22 See, e.g., Ernest Best, *Mark: The Gospel as Story* (London: T. & T. Clark, 1983), 79–83; Dieter Lüthmann, *Das Markusevangelium*, HNT 3 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1987); Udo Schnelle, *The History and Theology of the New Testament Writings*, trans. M. Eugene Boring (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998), 209.
- 23 Malbon, *Mark's Jesus*, 87–92, 99–101, 146, 158–72. Cf. W. R. Telford, *The Theology of the Gospel of Mark*, NTT (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 30–54, esp. 52–54; M. Eugene Boring, *Mark: A Commentary*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006), 256. See also, M. Eugene Boring, "The Christology of Mark: Hermeneutical Issues for

have eschewed a purely “human” portrait and maintained that Mark presents Jesus as both David’s son and David’s Lord.<sup>24</sup> Yet these studies were not interested in detailing the thoroughgoing relationship between Mark’s Jesus and David and God, nor did they approach the question from the perspective of ancient rhetoric. Moreover, these studies routinely limit the Davidic portrait to 10:46–12:37 and/or the passion. In short, no study of which I am aware approaches the topic of the portrait of Mark’s Jesus from the standpoint of the oral/aural experience of the narrative in the context of the first-century “rhetorical culture.”<sup>25</sup> Moreover, the specific question of his relationship to David and God, as it plays out over the course of the whole Gospel, likewise remains a desideratum. In what follows, I detail the most recent and extensive of these major narrative portraits of Mark’s Jesus, with special attention to these particular issues.<sup>26</sup> We begin with the foundational work by Jack Dean Kingsbury.

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Systematic Theology,” *Semeia* 30 (1984): 125–51; idem, “Markan Christology: God-Language for Jesus?,” *NTS* 45 (1999): 451–71.

- 24 See, e.g., Donald H. Juel, *A Master of Surprise: Mark Interpreted* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), 97–99; Stephen H. Smith, “The Function of the Son of David Tradition in Mark’s Gospel,” *NTS* 42 (1996): 523–39; Lidija Novakovic, *Messiah, the Healer of the Sick: A Study of Jesus as the Son of David in the Gospel of Matthew*, WUNT 2/170 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 50–54; Joel Marcus, *Mark 8–16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 27A (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 119–20; Anthony Le Donne, *The Historiographical Jesus: Memory, Typology, and the Son of David* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2009), 241–48; Stephen P. Ahearne-Kroll, *The Psalms of Lament in Mark’s Passion: Jesus’ Davidic Suffering*, SNTSMS 142 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
- 25 On “rhetorical culture,” see Vernon K. Robbins, “Writing as a Rhetorical Act in Plutarch and the Gospels,” in *Persuasive Artistry: Studies in New Testament Rhetoric in Honor of George A. Kennedy*, ed. Duane F. Watson, JSNTSup 50 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1991), 145. Robbins contrasts “oral culture” (environments where written literature is not in view) and “scribal culture” (where copying oral statements or written texts is primary) with “rhetorical culture,” in which “oral and written speech interact closely with one another” (145).
- 26 The import of the works by Tannehill and Rhoads and Michie (and Dewey) should not be overlooked and are only omitted from the main discussion because of the length (Tannehill) and focus (Rhoads and Michie) of their treatments. For his part, Tannehill’s “The Gospel of Mark as Narrative Christology” (1979), introduced for us the term “narrative christology” by which he intended to focus not on the titles abstracted from the story, but on the actions embedded in the plot: “We learn who Jesus is through what he says and does in the context of the action of others” (58). See further Robert C. Tannehill, “The Gospel of Mark as Narrative Christology,” *Semeia* 16 (1979): 57–95. Rhoads and Michie, and their *Mark as Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel* (1982), are in many ways the patrons of all who undertaken narrative readings of Mark’s Gospel. Joanna Dewey joined the project for the second edition in 1999; *Mark as Story* is now in its third edition



*Jack Dean Kingsbury's Davidic Messiah-King*

In Kingsbury's *The Christology of Mark's Gospel* (1983),<sup>27</sup> Mark's portrait of Jesus has two major aspects. On the one hand, there are titles, such as "Messiah," "Son of David," "King of the Jews (Israel)," and "Son of God," all of which develop in conjunction with the secrecy motif. These titles are all confessional and "specify, 'who Jesus is'" through the use of predication formulas ("you are the . . .").<sup>28</sup> Taken together, these titles describe Mark's Jesus as "the Davidic Messiah-King, the Son of God," understood in the sense of "divine sonship," a quality conferred by the fact that both supernatural beings and humans hail him as such.<sup>29</sup> Jesus is God's royal Son and what he does and says, he does and says under God's direct authority. Complementing (not correcting) this group of descriptors is Mark's use of the title "Son of Man," which is "without content as far as the identity of Jesus as such is concerned."<sup>30</sup> This "technical term" is a title that nevertheless connotes majesty in Mark and fits with his "earthly activity;

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(2012). On the legacy of *Mark as Story*, see Christopher W. Skinner, "Telling the Story: The Appearance and Impact of Mark as Story," in *Mark as Story: Retrospect and Prospect*, ed. Kelly R. Iverson and Christopher W. Skinner (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 1–18.

Two other essays in a recent volume, edited by Christopher W. Skinner and Matthew Ryan Hauge, which came out after I completed this study, deserve brief mention. The first is Ira Brent Driggers, "God as Healer of Creation in the Gospel of Mark," in *Character Studies and the Gospel of Mark*, ed. Christopher W. Skinner and Matthew Ryan Hauge, LNTS 483 (London: T&T Clark, 2014), 81–106. While Driggers puts his finger on the important tension between the "human" and "divine" in the portrait of Mark's Jesus, his essay is confounded by the traditional "high"/"low" christology distinction that creates a theological "paradox" for modern readers that may have not caused issues for ancient audience members. The second, an essay by Joel F. Williams ("Characterization of Jesus," 107–27), offers some helpful (even if relatively cursory) observations concerning Mark's Jesus as "Lord." However, Williams never goes beyond insisting that *kyrios* functions to connote that Mark's Jesus is "uniquely exalted in his authority" (125); more problematic (in relation to the aims of this study) it rejects the potential for ambiguity concerning *kyrios* (111–112). While Williams is correct that Johansson ("*Kyrios*," 101–24) does not provide any compelling warrant for understanding the ambiguity as intentional, this does not mean such a warrant is not present in the ancient rhetorical handbooks. Indeed, we shall see that such leveraging of intentional ambiguity was ubiquitous in antiquity (see Chapter Two below).

27 Kingsbury, *Christology*.

28 Kingsbury, *Christology*, 173.

29 Kingsbury, *Christology*, 173.

30 Kingsbury, *Christology*, 174.

suffering, death, and rising; and return for judgment and vindication.”<sup>31</sup> This is Mark’s “public title” for Jesus, which reveals aspects of Jesus’s “identity” otherwise obscured in the group of titles associated with the secrecy motif.<sup>32</sup>

### *Ole Davidsen’s Semiotic Jesus*

In his *The Narrative Jesus: A Semiotic Reading of Mark’s Gospel* (1993), Ole Davidsen seeks to understand Mark’s narrative christology through the lens of Claude Bremond’s work on narrative “roles” and “programs,” along with A.-J. Greimas’s work on semiotic squares.<sup>33</sup> For Davidsen, the fundamental christological question is Jesus’s relationship to God, which is understood as “processual christology.” “Christ is not something Jesus is, but something he becomes.”<sup>34</sup> As Christ, Mark’s Jesus has three fundamental roles: the Wonder-Worker, the Proclaimer, and the Savior. Davidsen argues that the role of Savior is foundational and that the roles of Wonder-Worker and Proclaimer are subsidiary. For Davidsen, christology is thus viewed as fundamentally soteriological: Mark’s Jesus plays the dual role of God’s representative to humanity, as well as humanity’s representative to God.

### *Edwin K. Broadhead’s “Titular Christology”*

As the title of the book suggests, Edwin K. Broadhead’s, *Naming Jesus: Titular Christology in the Gospel of Mark* (1999), sets out to relate the titles used for Jesus in Mark’s Gospel to the identity of the story’s protagonist.<sup>35</sup> After situating his own study amidst the long-standing discussion concerning the role of “titles” in understanding the portrait of Jesus in the NT gospels, Broadhead proposes what he calls “titular christology,” by which he intends to convey his conviction that “there are no titles which are inherently and unambiguously Christology.” Instead, “[the titles] become so only within defined social and literary contexts.”<sup>36</sup> Thus, the titles remain important but only as part of the overall characterization of Jesus in Mark. Broadhead examines sixteen titles used in the Gospel: “Jesus the Nazarene,” “Prophet,” “the Greater One,” “Priest,” “King,” “the Teacher,” “Shepherd,” “the Holy One of God,” “the Suffering Servant

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31 Kingsbury, *Christology*, xi, 174.

32 Kingsbury, *Christology*, 171.

33 Davidsen, *The Narrative Jesus*.

34 Davidsen, *The Narrative Jesus*, 335.

35 Broadhead, *Naming Jesus*. For his earlier work relating to Markan christology, see his, *Teaching With Authority*, along with his, *Prophet, Son, Messiah: Narrative Form and Function in Mark 14–16*, JSNTSup 97 (Sheffield, England: JSOT, 1994).

36 Broadhead, *Naming Jesus*, 28.



of God,” “Son of David,” “Son of God,” “Son of Man,” “Lord,” “Christ,” “The Risen One,” and “the Crucified One.” These titles are further grouped into embedded titles, framework titles, climactic titles, and extending titles. These epithets, Broadhead argues, are not merely imported (e.g., with ecclesiastically predetermined meaning) into Mark, but rather take their meaning from within the literary context.<sup>37</sup>

*Jacob C. Naluparayil's Son of Man as Divine Son*

Jacob C. Naluparayil's *The Identity of Jesus in Mark: An Essay on Narrative Christology* (2000) focuses on the christology of Mark in terms of identity. Naluparayil begins with a discussion of redactional issues and then turns to the points of view of five “individuals” in the Gospel of Mark: the narrator, God, Jesus, the disciples, and the Jewish leaders. Naluparayil deals with these characters on two planes (identity and ideology) and then turns his attention to the identity of Jesus. Naluparayil articulates the identity of Jesus from two vantage points: (1) that of the other characters and (2) Jesus himself. These traits are subsequently combined into a list of “prominent traits” and the “designation,” which together are designed to tell us “what Jesus is like.”<sup>38</sup>

Naluparayil's conclusion is that “‘the Son of Man’ functions in the narrative as the designation, as the locus of all the above-said divine character traits of the protagonist, as the name of the divine person.”<sup>39</sup> Thus, Son of Man is the controlling title for the identity of Mark's Jesus. For example, regarding whether Mark's Jesus is the Son of David, Naluparayil writes that

The narrator expects the reader to *evaluate* this popular acclamation [from Bartimaeus in 10:47–48 and the crowd in 11:9–10] and hold fast to his [*sic*] point of view on the basis of the revelations he [*sic*] has so far received from the narrator, the protagonist, and from God. [...] Jesus the Son of Man is the *Christ* only in so far as he is the *Son of God* (1:14–8:29).<sup>40</sup>

37 Broadhead is specifically responding to Oscar Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament*, trans. Shirley C. Guthrie and Charles A. M. Hall, Rev. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963); Ferdinand Hahn, *Titles of Jesus in Christology: Their History in Early Christianity*, trans. H. Knight and G. Ogg (London: Lutterworth, 1969); Reginald H. Fuller, *The Foundations of New Testament Christology* (London: Lutterworth, 1965); Petr Pokorný, *The Genesis of Christology: Foundations for a Theology of the New Testament*, trans. T. Lefebure (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1985). See Broadhead, *Naming Jesus*, 21–26.

38 Naluparayil, *Identity of Jesus in Mark*, 540.

39 Naluparayil, *Identity of Jesus in Mark*, 547.

40 Naluparayil, *Identity of Jesus in Mark*, 370, emphases original.

Thus, “Christ,” “Son of God,” and “Son of David” are strictly distinguished and evaluated such that the former two are set over against the lattermost. Similarly, regarding 12:35–37, Naluparayil argues that “the sonship of Christ” is *redefined* by Ps 110:1 (109:1 LXX) such that whatever Jesus does as “the Christ,” he does so as *more* than the Son of David, but rather as the Lord of David.<sup>41</sup> Ultimately, for Naluparayil, the Markan Jesus is not David’s son, but rather his Lord. Jesus’s “identity” as “the Christ” supersedes Davidic sonship.<sup>42</sup>

### *Paul Danove’s Rhetorical Approach to Mark’s Jesus*

Paul Danove’s *The Rhetoric of Characterization of God, Jesus and Jesus’s Disciples in the Gospel of Mark* (2005) is a work that, on first glance, appears to have much in common with this study.<sup>43</sup> However, Danove is focused purely on modern literary and rhetorical criticism and thus does not incorporate related theories from antiquity. Within modern rhetoric, he is primarily concerned with “neutral,” “sophisticating,” and “deconstructive” repetition.

From this vantage point, Danove argues that Jesus is related positively, though indirectly, with David through the repetition of key terms, such as “Son of David” and “King of the Jews,”<sup>44</sup> along with the fact that “Jesus does what David did (2:25).”<sup>45</sup> However, Danove’s focus is such that he never offers an extended treatment of that relationship with David, neither does he articulate how that relationship works on a narratival or rhetorical level, nor does he relate the Davidic connection to the relationship of Mark’s Jesus to God.

### *Elizabeth Struthers Malbon’s Mark’s Jesus*

Elizabeth Struthers Malbon’s *Mark’s Jesus: Characterization as Narrative Christology* (2009) approaches the Gospel of Mark from the vantage point of modern narrative criticism and distinguishes between the real author and the implied author, between the implied author and the narrator, between the characters in the story and the implied author, and between the real audience and the implied audience.<sup>46</sup> Malbon also differentiates between “Mark’s Jesus” and “the Markan Jesus.” This allows her to refer to the sum total of the Gospel’s characterization of Jesus (“Mark’s Jesus”), along with the character in

41 Naluparayil, *Identity of Jesus in Mark*, 383–84.

42 Naluparayil, *Identity of Jesus in Mark*, 384 n. 477.

43 Danove, *Rhetoric of Characterization*.

44 Danove, *Rhetoric of Characterization*, 58, 61, 65, 72 n. 26.

45 Danove, *Rhetoric of Characterization*, 65.

46 Malbon, *Mark’s Jesus*.

the Gospel (“the Markan Jesus”)—and the two are not always in agreement. She assembles a narrative characterization of “Mark’s Jesus” based on what the “Markan Jesus” does (enacted Christology), what others say (projected Christology), what the Markan Jesus says in response (deflected Christology), what the Markan Jesus says instead (refracted Christology), and what others do (reflected Christology). The portrait of *Mark’s Jesus* (the implied author’s conception of Jesus) emerges as distinct, even disparate, from *the Markan Jesus* (the character in the story).

Most notably, Mark’s Jesus is portrayed as deserving of all honor and praise whereas the Markan Jesus deflects all praise toward God. Concerning the relationship between Mark’s Jesus and David, Mark’s Jesus is *not* the Son of David; Davidic christology is rejected altogether rather than redefined.<sup>47</sup> For example, narrative silence is used to reject Bartimaeus’s cries for the Son of David in 10:46–52, and the acclamations when Jesus enters Jerusalem are similarly ignored in 11:1–11.<sup>48</sup> The “obvious conclusion of the Markan Jesus’s citation and interpretation of Psalm 110.1” (Mark 12:35–37) is the “rejection of the application of ‘Son of David’ to the Christ.”<sup>49</sup>

### *Scott S. Elliott’s Reconfiguration of Mark’s Jesus*

Scott S. Elliott’s, *Reconfiguring Mark’s Jesus: Narrative Criticism after Poststructuralism* (2011), provides an extended critique of biblical narrative criticism by processing the characterization of Mark’s Jesus in light of narrative criticism, Greek novels, and poststructuralist literary theory. Like Malbon before him, Elliott highlights narrative tensions in characters, which are “paper people” who remain two-dimensional, “‘creatures of discourse,’ stuck in a story world that is always provisional and completely inescapable.”<sup>50</sup>

Embracing the discoured nature of both texts and persons, Elliott leverages focalization, dialogue, and plot, which simultaneously creates characters and threatens to undo them, in order to provide a characterization of Mark’s Jesus that avoids the inconsistencies Elliott finds in biblical narrative criticism.

47 Malbon, *Mark’s Jesus*, 87–92, 99–101, 146, 158–72.

48 Malbon, *Mark’s Jesus*, 87–92, 100, 148.

49 Malbon, *Mark’s Jesus*, 159.

50 Scott S. Elliott, *Reconfiguring Mark’s Jesus: Narrative Criticism after Poststructuralism* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2011), 171–72. On characters as “paper people” (terminology from Mieke Bal), see further Elliott, *Reconfiguring Mark’s Jesus*, 59–97. See also, Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, 3d ed. (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 115.

Elliott's book, a published version of his dissertation under Stephen D. Moore, provides a fascinating poststructuralist account of the process of characterization, the goal of which "was not to more thoroughly flesh out Jesus as a character, but rather to read the processes of his characterization in the Gospel of Mark. [...] In fact, my aim has been to problematize any connection between the narrative character and the historical person."<sup>51</sup>

*Johansson's Unity and Diversity between Mark's Jesus and God*

The most recent work in Markan narrative christology is Daniel Johansson's, "Jesus and God in the Gospel of Mark: Unity and Distinction" (2012).<sup>52</sup> Johansson is "primarily concerned with Mark's narrative and the author's portrayal of Jesus."<sup>53</sup> The "Markan Jesus assumes divine attributes and acts in exclusively divine roles," fulfilling "Old Testament promises about God's own intervention and coming," in such a way that "his relationship to people is analogous to God's relationship to Israel."<sup>54</sup> Johansson also published an article in *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, entitled, "Kyrios in the Gospel of Mark" (2010), which explored a series of instances in which there may be a shared referent of *kyrios* (Jesus and God) at several key points in the Markan narrative, including 1:3, 2:28; 5:19; 11:3; and 12:36.<sup>55</sup> Johansson, however, does not provide an explanation or rationale for such ambiguity concerning *kyrios*.

While much has been written about Mark's Jesus in the past thirty years, the narrative characterization of Jesus in Mark has yet to be explored from the perspective of its oral/aural rhetorical context. As detailed in the chapters below, the Davidic and *kyriot* elements of Mark's portrait of Jesus are buried deep within the ambiguous, even pregnant, language of the Gospel. It is therefore not surprising that the same studies that overlook the ancient rhetoric of inference are the same ones that also overlook the complex and rich depiction of Mark's Jesus as the *kyriot* son, the one in whom scripts related to David and Yahweh converge.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Elliott, *Reconfiguring*, 198.

<sup>52</sup> Johansson, "Jesus and God in Mark." At the time of writing, Johansson's dissertation was thus far unpublished.

<sup>53</sup> Johansson, "Jesus and God in Mark," ii.

<sup>54</sup> Johansson, "Jesus and God in Mark," ii.

<sup>55</sup> Johansson, "Kyrios."

<sup>56</sup> My own investigation has yielded similar results as Morrison, who noted he "found no scholar since 1900 that made Son of David the overarching concern of Mark when it came to Jesus' identity" (197). Gregg S. Morrison, *The Turning Point in the Gospel of Mark: A Study in Markan Christology* (Eugene, Ore.: Pickwick, 2014), 197. While I do not find the "son of

While one may appreciate some aspects of Jesus's relation to God or David through traditional narrative criticism, in order to gain a more complete picture it is necessary to explore the rhetoric of the first-century world in which Mark's Gospel was composed and experienced—along modern studies of how humans process narratives and make sense of texts.

### Distinctives of this Study

This study provides the first cognitive and rhetorical approach to Mark's Jesus in the context of a public reading. Despite the wealth of available research on the psychology of reading, hearing, and narrative persuasion,<sup>57</sup> work in the NT to date has tended to leave it untapped. Moreover, while there can be no doubt of the indebtedness of this monograph to the studies discussed above, the absence of work taking place at the intersection of performance and ancient rhetoric is nevertheless lamentable. That the two were intertwined in the "rhetorical culture" of the first century, in which *oral* recitation of *written* texts held pride of place, ought to prod us into mining the riches of ancient rhetorical theory in our construals of Mark's Jesus. Put simply, attention to the modern cognitive research and the rhetorical theory from the milieu of the earliest performances of the narrative help fully account for the oral/aural context of Mark's Gospel, a topic to which a growing number of scholars are attracted in its own right.<sup>58</sup>

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David" title adequate to convey even the Davidic contours of *kyriotic* sonship, it is nevertheless symptomatic of the scholarly landscape.

57 On which, see Chapter Two below.

58 While I benefit from silent reading as part of my own research, so also do I utilize actual performances of Mark's Gospel, like those by Max McLean and Tom Boomershine. Max McLean's performance of Mark's Gospel is available on DVD at <http://tinyurl.com/nra89ve> (available as of 7/9/2016). Boomershine has performed selections of Mark's Gospel and made them available at <http://messiahofpeace.com/commentaryvideos/> (available as of 7/9/2016). While research from scholars, such as Hurtado ("Oral Fixation") and Nässelqvist (*Public Reading in Early Christianity*, 1–118), has called into question that there were ancient analogues to the bombastic performances of Mark's from memory like the ones we see from McLean and Boomershine, the ability to experience the narrative aurally provided by these recordings is nevertheless invaluable as it helps us better (if imperfectly) approximate early experiences of the Markan narrative. Despite the myriad of differences between ancient and modern performances, not least the language, exposure to the continuous pace of performance is invaluable.

Despite the fact that cognition, rhetoric, and performance have to this point not been joined in an exploration of Mark's Jesus, the focus on Mark's Gospel as a text intended to be heard is not new,<sup>59</sup> nor is the attention to ancient

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- 59 The original publication of Werner H. Kelber's, *The Oral and the Written Gospel: The Hermeneutics of Speaking and Writing in the Synoptic Tradition, Mark, Paul and Q*, in 1983 marked (and perhaps initiated) an increase in interest in the oral dimension of the New Testament in general and the Gospel of Mark in particular. Since that time, research concerning the specific reading practices of antiquity has joined with interest in the oral dimensions of the Gospel of Mark in new and exciting ways. For example, in 2003, Whitney Shiner published his *Proclaiming the Gospel: First-Century Performance of Mark* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International). Shiner offers concise discussions of various modes of oral delivery in the first century, along with expectations for audience participation and inclusion, as well as offering case studies for its application to the Gospel of Mark along the way. Shiner's work was the first of its kind and has spurred on the engagement of Mark from the standpoint of performance, even if the breadth of its treatment of ancient performance theory limited its discussion of the Markan text. Performance critical studies took on new developments with Antoinette Clark Wire's *The Case for Mark Composed in Performance* (2011), which has registered the most thorough argument to date that Mark's Gospel was composed, not by a single author who put stylus to papyrus, but by a series of storytellers, who recited this specific narrative of Jesus over the course of many decades. Most recently, Kristen Marie Hartvigsen's *Prepare the Way of the Lord: Towards a Cognitive Poetic Analysis of Audience Involvement with Characters and Events in the Markan World* (2012) sets forth an engaging study of audience involvement in Mark's Gospel that builds upon an ancient performance scenario through the application of the growing field of cognitive poetics. For a selection of applications of performance criticism to NT texts, see, most recently, William D. Shiell, *Reading Acts: The Lector and the Early Christian Audience*, *BibInt* 70 (Leiden: Brill, 2004); idem, *Delivering from Memory: The Effect of Performance on the Early Christian Audience* (Eugene, Ore.: Pickwick, 2011); Pieter J. J. Botha, *Orality and Literacy in Early Christianity*, *BPC* 5 (Eugene, Ore.: Cascade, 2012); Samuel Byrskog, "The Early Church as a Narrative Fellowship: An Exploratory Study of the Performance of the Chreia," *TTKi* 78 (2007): 207–26; Dan Nässelqvist, "Stylistic Levels in Hebrews 1.1–4 and John 1.1–18," *JSNT* 35 (2012): 31–53; idem, *Public Reading in Early Christianity*; Joanna Dewey, *Oral Ethos of the Early Church: Speaking, Writing, and the Gospel of Mark* (Eugene, Ore.: Cascade, 2013); Richard A. Horsley, *Text and Tradition in Performance and Writing* (Eugene, Ore.: Cascade, 2013); J. A. Loubser, *Oral and Manuscript Culture in the Bible: Studies on the Media Texture of the New Testament—Explorative Hermeneutics*, *BPC* 7 (Eugene, Ore.: Cascade, 2013); Richard F. Ward and David J. Trobisch, *Bringing the Word to Life: Engaging the New Testament through Performing It* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013). Cf. The collection of essays in Kelly R. Iverson, ed., *From Text to Performance: Narrative and Performance Criticisms in Dialogue and Debate* (Eugene, Ore.: Cascade, 2014). Tom Boomershine is likewise working on a performance-critical commentary on Mark's passion and resurrection narrative. Unfortunately, Boomershine's commentary was not yet available at the time of this project. For more on cognitive poetic analysis, a subset

rhetoric, though the rhetoric of inference has been relatively overlooked as far as the study of the NT is concerned.<sup>60</sup> Unfortunately, however, despite the cultural connectedness of oral delivery to rhetoric in antiquity, there is as yet no study that joins performance and rhetoric in the articulation of a characterization of Mark's Jesus in a way that squares with what cognitive scientists tell us about the way humans make sense of narratives.

Therefore, in distinction from previous approaches to Mark's Jesus, this study leverages modern cognitive research and ancient rhetorical theory to

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of speech act theory, see Peter Stockwell, *Cognitive Poetics: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2002). For developments in the field and the most up-to-date state of the question concerning cognitive poetics, See Geert Brône and Jeroen Vandaele, eds., *Cognitive Poetics: Goals, Gains and Gaps* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009).

- 60 Following the work of Mikeal C. Parsons, many of the dissertations coming out of Baylor University have used ancient rhetoric to explore other early Christian texts. Most recently, see Kathy Reiko Maxwell, *Hearing Between the Lines: The Audience as Fellow-Workers in Luke-Acts and Its Literary Milieu*, LNTS 425 (London; New York: T. & T. Clark, 2010); Keith A. Reich, *Figuring Jesus: The Power of Rhetorical Figures of Speech in the Gospel of Luke* (Leiden: Brill, 2011); Alicia D. Myers, *Characterizing Jesus: A Rhetorical Analysis on the Fourth Gospel's Use of Scripture in Its Presentation of Jesus*, LNTS 458 (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2012); Heather M. Gorman, *Interweaving Innocence: A Rhetorical Analysis of Luke's Passion Narrative (Luke 22:66–23:49)* (Eugene, Ore.: Pickwick, 2015); Brian C. Small, *The Characterization of Jesus in the Book of Hebrews*, BIS 128 (Leiden: Brill, 2014); Justin D. King, "Speech-in-Character, Diatribe, and Romans 3:1–9: Who's Speaking When and Why It Matters" (Ph.D. diss., Baylor University, 2016); Lindsey M. Trozzo, "Exploring Johannine Ethics: A Rhetorical Approach to Moral Efficacy in the Fourth Gospel Narrative" (Ph.D. diss., Baylor University, 2016). On the use of the rhetoric of inference (though that terminology is not used), see Maxwell, *Hearing*; Jason A. Whitlark, "'Here We Do Not Have a City That Remains': A Figured Critique of Roman Imperial Propaganda in Hebrews 13:14," *JBL* 131 (2012): 161–79; Karl McDaniel, *Experiencing Irony in the First Gospel: Suspense, Surprise and Curiosity*, LNTS 488 (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013). Abraham Smith notes the figure *emphasis/significatio* in relation to modern gap theory in his, *Comfort One Another: Reconstructing the Rhetoric and Audience of 1 Thessalonians* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1995), 110 n. 4. For her part, Maxwell focuses on a variety of tactics for prompting audience inference in Luke-Acts and contemporary Hellenistic literature. Likewise, McDaniel articulates the use of ironic figured speech in Matt 1:21 to elicit and develop the emotions of suspense, surprise, and curiosity among audience members. Classicists have not devoted much attention to figured speech either. But see Frederick Ahl, "The Art of Safe Criticism in Greece and Rome," *AJP* 105 (1984): 174–208; Richard F. Thomas, "A Trope by Any Other Name: 'Polysemy,' Ambiguity, and Significatio in Virgil," *HSCPh* 100 (2000): 381–407; Steve Mason, "Figured Speech and Irony in T. Flavius Josephus," in *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome*, ed. J. C. Edmondson, Steve Mason, and J. B. Rives (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 243–88.



attend to Mark's Gospel in the context of the aural experience of a public reading. As we shall see in Chapter Two, the human brain has changed very little, if at all, in the past two thousand years. In addition, while the handbooks were written to reflect and inculcate the techniques of the day for those at the highest levels of formal education, these techniques nevertheless trickled down to the lower ranks as well, and presumably even out into the streets where the crowds learned to appreciate them.<sup>61</sup>

To be sure, Mark's Gospel has not been the recipient of a great deal of attention from the perspective of Hellenistic rhetoric.<sup>62</sup> However, whether Mark's Gospel was originally a written composition that was later performed or was first a performance that was only later written down,<sup>63</sup> the educational milieu of the first-century Roman world is such that the ability to compose and read aloud complex narratives properly was taught simultaneously with rhetorical techniques that engaged audience members to become involved in those narratives.<sup>64</sup> To put the matter another way, the ability to compose or recite a literary text of the quality and sophistication of Mark's Gospel would only be

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- 61 To illustrate, even those learning paraphrase in the *progymnasmata*, Theon tells us, learned how to emulate the style of advanced rhetors (Theon, *Prog.* 15). For example, they might take a stylistically plain speech from Lysias and recast it in the more ornamental style of Demosthenes or vice versa. This technique was also practiced with other types of writing, such as historical narratives, which suggests a great deal of bleed through between levels of rhetorical training. On the difficulty of delineating between primary, secondary, and tertiary levels within Greek and Roman education, see Raffaella Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 36–44.
- 62 Ancient rhetorical studies in Mark's Gospel have been less common than performance, mostly revolving around attention to *chreia*. See, e.g., Jerome H. Neyrey, "Questions, Chreiai, and Challenges to Honor: The Interface of Rhetoric and Culture in Mark's Gospel," *CBQ* 60 (1998): 657–81; Marion Moeser, *The Anecdote in Mark, the Classical World and the Rabbis: A Study of Brief Stories in the Demonax, The Mishnah, and Mark 8:27–10:45* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2002); Byrskog, "Early Church," 207–26.
- 63 For Mark as a composition formed in performance, see Wire, *The Case for Mark Composed in Performance*. A decision on this matter does not significantly affect the present study.
- 64 Similarly, George Alexander Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism*, Studies in Religion (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), ix; Mikeal C. Parsons, "Luke and the Progymnasmata: A Preliminary Investigation into the Preliminary Exercises," in *Contextualizing Acts: Lukan Narrative and Greco-Roman Discourse*, ed. Todd C. Penner and Caroline Vander Stichele, *SBLSymS* 20 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 43–63; Maxwell, *Hearing*, 22–25.



gained in the same context as training in rhetoric.<sup>65</sup> Since the study that follows is itself an extended rebuttal against objections to the utility of ancient rhetoric in reading Mark's Gospel, only three comments are necessary at this early stage.<sup>66</sup>

First, one need not possess the rhetorical prowess of Demosthenes or (to a *much* lesser degree) the author of Luke or Acts in order to have substantial rhetorical training.<sup>67</sup> In other words, the composer of Mark's Gospel will have benefitted from a level of rhetorical training, but that he or she does not rival Demosthenes is not evidence for a lack of higher levels of education altogether. Second, Mark's Gospel itself, however "unrefined" by some standards, is far more complex than ninety or more percent of people in the Greco-Roman world were capable of composing or reciting skillfully, and one did not gain the requisite skills for either activity apart from complementary training in rhetoric.<sup>68</sup> In other words, the existence of Mark's Gospel in its current form supports the idea that its composer enjoyed a relatively high level of rhetorical training. Third and finally, regardless of what one may think of the rhetorical education of the actual composer of Mark's Gospel, the descriptive

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65 The melting-pot nature of the classrooms in antiquity, in which all three levels of education were often held in the same room, underscores the difficulty in drawing a hard distinction between primary, secondary, and tertiary education in the first-century Mediterranean world. Failure to countenance this feature, present even in urban areas, is a central problem with Osvaldo Padilla's argument that the author of Acts did not possess rhetorical training at the tertiary level. Padilla also assumes a kind of rigidity between primary and secondary and secondary and tertiary levels. Progymnastic training appears to have taken place, in many instances, in the cusp between the two, e.g. between grammar and declamation. While Padilla was interested in Acts, a similar objection could be leveled against Mark's Gospel. However, whether the composer(s) of Mark's Gospel were formally educated in handbooks like Quintilian's or *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, it will be demonstrated below that the figures contained therein were nevertheless used with great profit; moreover, my interest in this study is primarily with the public reading of a trained lector, whose requisite education would prompt him or her to read Mark's Gospel in light of the rhetorical theory of the day. For further discussion of the structure and organization of schools in antiquity, see Cribiore, *Gymnastics*, 36–44. For Padilla's argument, see Osvaldo Padilla, "Hellenistic παιδεία and Luke's Education: A Critique of Recent Approaches," *NTS* 55 (2009): 416–37.

66 That is, according to the old adage, "the proof of the pudding is in the eating."

67 Anyone who has spent any length of time teaching knows that the skill and craft of students varies widely across a single classroom. How much more across a society! There is no reason to assume this is a phenomenon isolated to our present experience.

68 See further Chapter Two below.

nature of ancient rhetorical theory—together with the situatedness of Mark's Gospel within the first-century rhetorical culture—both prompts and justifies the analysis of its narrative according to the rhetorical theory of its day. Since rhetoric was in the air of the culture, the vast majority in ancient audiences will all have had at least a moderate amount of appreciation for rhetorical skill whether or not they were able to describe the theory behind the tactics themselves. That said, we should bear in mind that audience members need not be able to name a rhetorical figure in order to be moved by it.

Since it will not do to speak in generalities only, we now turn to the specific parameters and assumptions of this study, with special attention to the proposed performance event, its performer, and the audience.

### Assumptions of this Study

Before turning to Chapter Two, where relevant cognitive research, performance theory, and the rhetoric of inference will be discussed in detail, a few reasoned assumptions merit attention. The first concerns the performative context.

#### *The Performance Setting*

Questions concerning for whom the Gospels were written have occupied a great deal of attention.<sup>69</sup> It is typically suggested that Mark's Gospel was written specifically for people in Rome, Syria, or Galilee, though Bauckham has argued that the scope was more universal in character.<sup>70</sup> However, situating a

69 Cf. Richard Bauckham, "For Whom Were the Gospels Written?," in *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences*, ed. Richard Bauckham (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 9–48.

70 For those supporting a Roman provenance, see, e.g., Bas M. F. van Iersel, *Mark: A Reader-Response Commentary*, LNTS 164 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 30–57; Ben Witherington III, *The Gospel of Mark: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 20–36; John R. Donahue and Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark*, SP 2 (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2002), 41–46; Brian J. Incigneri, *The Gospel to the Romans: The Setting and Rhetoric of Mark's Gospel*, Biblical Interpretation Series 65 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), esp. 59–115; Martin Hengel, *Die vier Evangelien und das eine Evangelium von Jesus Christus Studien zu ihrer Sammlung und Entstehung*, WUNT 2/224 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 141; Adam Winn, *The Purpose of Mark's Gospel: An Early Christian Response to Roman Imperial Propaganda*, WUNT 2/245 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 43–91. For those preferring a Syrian provenance, see, e.g., Howard Clark Kee, *Community of the New Age: Studies in Mark's Gospel* (London: SCM, 1977), 100–05; Gerd Theissen, *Lokalkolorit und Zeitgeschichte in den Evangelien: ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition*,

particular *performance* of Mark's Gospel is an even thornier endeavor. Even if we assume for the sake of the argument that Mark's Gospel was originally written for a specific community, the Gospel was nevertheless eventually performed outside of that community. Moreover, we know that each performance was tailored to the specific audience in attendance.<sup>71</sup> Thus, irrespective of the specific group for whom Mark's Gospel was composed, it was in all likelihood particularized for each particular performance audience. In other words, the scope of performance audiences for Mark's Gospel is at once both complementary to Bauckham's literary model and more narrowly focused than traditional models for compositional communities.

Worship gatherings, liturgies, and even missionary activities have all been suggested as potential performance settings in antiquity.<sup>72</sup> However, as William

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NTOA 8 (Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg, 1989), 246–70; Joel Marcus, "The Jewish War and the *Sitz im Leben* of Mark," *JBL* 111 (1992): 441–62; idem, *Mark 1–8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 27 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 25–39. For Galilee, see, e.g., Hendrika Nicoline Roskam, *The Purpose of the Gospel of Mark in Its Historical and Social Context*, NovTSup 114 (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2004), 94–114. For a universal scope, see Bauckham, "For Whom," 9–48. Against Bauckham, however, see the response by Margaret M. Mitchell, "Patristic Counter-Evidence to the Claim that 'The Gospels Were Written for All Christians,'" *NTS* 51 (2005): 36–79, which demonstrates that the patristic record is not as monolithically amenable to Bauckham's thesis as he suggests.

71 For example, Plato details the significance of an orator's knowledge of the different types of souls, including their emotional affinities, which, in turn, enables him or her to tailor the speech to the specific audience members (*Phaedr.* 271b). Likewise, Dionysius of Halicarnassus lauded Lysias for his ability to adapt his style to the speaker, the audience, and the subject (*Lys.* 9). At a theoretical level, Quintilian commended tailoring one's performance to the specific audience on the specific occasion (*Inst.* 4.1.17–20). In forensic rhetoric, this even involved making split-second judgments on how to continue the speech based on audience reactions (e.g., lingering on what they liked and abandoning what they did not) (*Inst.* 6.4.19; 12.10.56–57). Finally, every aspect of the physical delivery was to be tailored to the audience at hand (*Inst.* 11.1.43–48; 11.3.150). See further the discussion in Whitney T. Shiner, *Proclaiming the Gospel: First-Century Performance of Mark* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity, 2003), 26–30. See further "Oral Performance as an Ancient Necessity and Skill" in Chapter Two below.

72 Kirsten Marie Hartvigsen, *Prepare the Way of the Lord: Towards a Cognitive Poetic Analysis of Audience Involvement with Characters and Events in the Markan World*, BZNW 180 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012), 11. Cf. Lars Hartman, "Das Markusevangelium, 'für die lectio sollemnis im Gottesdienst abgefaßt'?", in *Text-Centered New Testament Studies: Text-Theoretical Essays on Early Jewish and Early Christian Literature*, ed. David Hellholm, WUNT 2/102 (Tübingen: Mohr Seibek, 1997), 25–51; Charles A. Bobertz, "Prolegomena to a Ritual/Liturgical Reading of the Gospel of Mark," in *Reading Christian Communities: Essays on Interpretation in the Early Church*, ed. Charles A. Bobertz and David Brakke

Shiell has demonstrated, the majority of readings in private settings took place in a manner modeled after *symposia*.<sup>73</sup> When this datum is joined with Jerome Neyrey's suggestion that early Christian meals functioned similarly to these *symposia*,<sup>74</sup> it may be reasonably concluded that a primary setting for early performances of Mark's Gospel was during early Christian meal gatherings.<sup>75</sup> For those accustomed to experiencing a performance during a *symposium*, this setting would be a natural context for an oral delivery (public reading) of Mark's Gospel by a skilled lector from the community.

Thus, while many performance settings are plausible, and it seems a mistake to rule any out from the historical record, for the purposes of this study the performance of Mark's Gospel is situated in the context of an early Christian meal somewhere in the Roman Empire.<sup>76</sup> Further, we situate this meal shortly within a decade after the fall of Jerusalem. This will be particularly important when we consider the rhetorical impact of a presentation of Jesus as a *royal* Davidic figure, who is "*Lord*," as such an appeal would have much to offer a group trying to follow the way of the cross in a land dominated by Rome and her emperor.<sup>77</sup>

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(Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002), 174–87. Kummel opts for the gospels being read both in worship and as missionary writings. See his, *Introduction to the New Testament*, trans. Howard C. Kee, Rev. ed., NTL (London: SCM, 1975), 37. On different potential settings for Mark's Gospel, see Mary Ann Beavis, *Mark's Audience: The Literary and Social Setting of Mark 4.11–12*, JSNTSup 33 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1989), 45–67, who concludes that Mark was performed in the context of early Christian worship and liturgy, written by a missionary for his mixed audience, including both other missionaries and perhaps non-Christians (66).

73 Shiell, *Reading Acts*, 102–37, esp. 127.

74 Jerome H. Neyrey, "Reader's Guide to Meals, Food, and Table Fellowship in the New Testament," in *Social Sciences and New Testament Interpretation*, ed. Richard Rohrbaugh (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1996), 3–4.

75 Similarly, Shiell, *Reading Acts*, 127; William A. Johnson, *Readers and Reading Culture in the Early Roman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 127–28; Valeriy A. Alikin, *The Earliest History of the Christian Gathering: Origin, Development and Content of the Christian Gathering in the First to Third Centuries* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 157–58; Nässelqvist, *Public Reading in Early Christianity*, 94–103. As Nässelqvist points out, this conclusion is borne out by second- and third-century Christian texts, such as the *Acts of Peter*, which locates the reading of the gospel in the *triclinium* (a large dining room used for banquets) (*Acts Pet.* 19–20).

76 Similarly, Shiner, *Proclaiming*, 49–52; Hartvigsen, *Prepare*, 11–12. Working from both literary and pictorial sources, Nässelqvist (*Public Reading in Early Christianity*, 103) also finds the early Christian meal the most common for setting for public readings of NT texts.

77 On which, see Chapter Seven.

### *The Performer*

In terms of possible performers, it is theoretically possible Mark's Gospel may have been performed by individuals from any number of classes, including gifted street performers, hired professional performers/lectors, storytellers within the community who were not professional storytellers, even those who were slaves or freed persons, along with mothers and nursemaids.<sup>78</sup> However, as Daniel Nässelqvist has recently and convincingly demonstrated,<sup>79</sup> the oral performance of literary texts, including narratives, seems to be mostly the territory of highly trained lectors (ἀναγνώστης),<sup>80</sup> that is, professional readers.<sup>81</sup>

78 Hartvigsen, *Prepare*, 12. Similarly, Joanna Dewey, "The Survival of Mark's Gospel: A Good Story?," *JBL* 123 (2004): 497–98. On the potential for women to thrive as storytellers in informal settings, see Joanna Dewey, "From Storytelling to Written Text: The Loss of Early Christian Women's Voices," *BTB* 26 (1996): 71–78; Antoinette Clark Wire, *Holy Lives, Holy Deaths: A Close Hearing of Early Jewish Storytellers* (Leiden: Brill, 2002); Holly E. Hearon, *The Mary Magdalene Tradition: Witness and Counter-Witness in Early Christian Communities* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical, 2004), 36–40. On slaves and freedmen as performers (lectors), who used written manuscripts, see Christiane Kunst, *Römische Lebenswelten: Quellen zur Geschichte der römischen Stadt* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2000), 208–09; Shiell, *Reading Acts*, 9, 15, 24–27, 31–33.

79 Nässelqvist, *Public Reading in Early Christianity*, 72–77.

80 I agree with Hartvigsen (*Prepare*, 12) that it is highly plausible that the lector would have been male, especially given the public nature of church meetings, even those that met in a private home. However, in this study I reserve judgment on the gender of the lector, using inclusive language whenever necessary. On the public nature of church gatherings, see Karl Olav Sandnes, "Ekklesia at Corinth: Between Private and Public," *TTKi* 3 (2007): 248–65. On the structure of Roman houses, which allowed for the discrimination between private and public corridors, see Kunst, *Römische*, 185. For evidence that more women reached the tertiary level of education in the Greco-Roman world than is typically estimated, see Richard Leo Enos and Terry Shannon Peterman, "Writing Instruction of the 'Young Ladies' of Teos: A Note on Women and Literacy in Antiquity," *Rhetoric Review* 33 (2014): 1–20. Nässelqvist (*Public Reading in Early Christianity*, 79) also notes the existence of female lectors.

81 This conclusion stands in stark contrast to most previous performance critical work, which, since Shiner's *Proclaiming* was published, has tended to take for granted that narratives like the Gospel of Mark were performed from memory, accompanied by the compelling use of gestures (usually as described in Quintilian, *Inst.* 11.3). However, the most recent work in the area has challenged this notion, suggesting that this approach may blur the territory of orators and actors with that of the lector. While the lector was highly educated and read narratives aloud expressively and compellingly, at least one of his (or her) hands was typically occupied with the manuscript, which was a hallmark of the public reading event. Further, the fact that lectors were typically depicted as (1) seated and (2) reading from a manuscript is highlighted as evidence against the use of gestures, at

While the most educated of the upper class theoretically would have been able to perform a public reading, factors such as (1) concern for the laborious task of reading (esp. performing hard work on behalf of others),<sup>82</sup> (2) fear of embarrassment or shame in the event of fumbling during the reading,<sup>83</sup> and (3) the desire for a more enjoyable reading experience,<sup>84</sup> meant that even those capable of performing a public reading typically hired a lector for the job, especially for a public reading during a meal.<sup>85</sup>

For this reason, this study attends to Mark's Gospel as a text verbally performed by a member of the community formally educated in the rhetorical conventions of his or her day as a lector.<sup>86</sup> This person will have possessed the

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least on a grand scale. While my study does not attend to the potential use of gestures in the reading event, the inherent diversity of public reading practice would seem to point away from drawing strong lines for or against particular gestures during the reading event (see further in Chapter Two below). Among those maintaining that lectors did not use gestures in the same way actors and orators did, see Florence Dupont, "Recitatio and the Reorganization of the Space of Public Discourse," in *The Roman Cultural Revolution*, ed. Thomas Habinek and Alessandro Schiesaro (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 46–47; Donka D. Markus, "Performing the Book: The Recital of Epic in First-Century C.E. Rome," *CLAnt* 19 (2000): 140–44, esp. 144; Holt N. Parker, "Books and Reading Latin Poetry," in *Ancient Literacies: The Culture of Reading in Greece and Rome*, ed. William A. Johnson and Holt N. Parker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 203; Hurtado, "Oral Fixation," 335; Nässelqvist, *Public Reading in Early Christianity*, 72–78. The seminal work suggesting that the fullness of rhetorical gesturing was applied to public reading is Shiell, *Reading Acts*.

82 Keith R. Bradley, *Slavery and Society at Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 80; William Fitzgerald, *Slavery and the Roman Literary Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 1, 6.

83 Aulus Gellius, *Noct. Att.* 13.31.1–11; Plautus, *Bacch.* 433–434; Pliny the Younger, *Ep.* 3.5.12.

84 Pliny the Younger, *Ep.* 5.19; Dio Chrysostom, *Dic. exercit.* 6.

85 See further Nässelqvist, *Public Reading in Early Christianity*, 77–82. As Hurtado and Keith have put it, "[T]here was a direct correlation on the part of the elite between the possession of literate skills and ability (via wealth and patronage) to avoid using them when desired." Larry W. Hurtado and Chris Keith, "Writing and Book Production in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods," in *The New Cambridge History of the Bible: From the Beginnings to 600*, ed. James Carleton Paget and Joachim Schaper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 71–72.

86 Here I distinguish between the "lectors," who read for early Christian communities from the minor office of Lector that emerged in the third, or perhaps fourth century (see Tertullian, *Praescr.* 41; Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.43.11; Hippolytus, *Trad. ap.* 1.12; *Apostolic Constitutions* 8.22). The choice of a lector from the community (rather than one hired from outside the community) is based on the sizeable cost burden to hire a lector on a weekly basis and the existence of distinctive Christian markings on Christian literary



equivalent of an education beyond the *progymnasmata* and into the rhetorical handbooks; as a result she or he will be able to detect figured speech and other devices.<sup>87</sup> Moreover, as a member of the community he or she would also be able to draw out allusive language rooted in the Jewish scriptures so prized by early Christianity.

In other words, our lector has been inculcated with all the literacy and literary skills available in the first century, including the spectrum of tools for both oral delivery and compelling rhetoric, as well as an enviable knowledge of the Septuagint. As such, this person would have the requisite training to pore over a manuscript of Mark's Gospel,<sup>88</sup> decipher its *scriptio continua*, detecting narrative flow, appropriate emphases, as well as its subtle use of figured speech in order to help the audience participate in the narrative to the advantage of rhetorical aims of the story itself.<sup>89</sup> These and other factors, including reader's

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manuscripts (such as the *nomina sacra* and the *tau-rho*). See further Näselsqvist, *Public Reading in Early Christianity*, 94–95. Lectors often enjoyed upper class status as highly trained members of the *literati*; alternatively, they were sometimes servants or slaves educated privately and specifically for the task of skilled public reading. See Näselsqvist, *Public Reading in Early Christianity*, 77–82. Cf. Raymond J. Starr, "Reading Aloud: Lectores and Roman Reading," *CJ* 86 (1991): 338; John Wight Duff and Anthony J. S. Spawforth, "Anagnôstês," *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Peter L. Schmidt, "Lector," *Brill's New Pauly* (Leiden: Brill, 2013). On the historical development from "lector" to "Lector," see Näselsqvist, *Public Reading in Early Christianity*, 63–118; Shiell, *Reading Acts*, 1–3.

- 87 While some lectors received formal training in the rhetorical schools, others received equivalent education as slaves in the master's household, many of which had provision for educating slaves "in house" at a *paedagogium* without delegating the training to a literal, physical school. Imperial *paedagogia* were found throughout Rome and other major cities. See further Näselsqvist, *Public Reading in Early Christianity*, 93–94. On the use of *paedagogia*, see S. L. Mohler, "Slave Education in the Roman Empire," *TAPA* 71 (1940): 270–76; Clarence A. Forbes, "The Education and Training of Slaves in Antiquity," *TAPA* 86 (1955): 334–36. On the potential for slave education to reap long-term economic gains for the master's household, see W. Martin Bloomer, "Schooling in Persona: Imagination and Subordination in Roman Education," *CLAnt* 16 (1997): 61–62; J. P. V. D. Balsdon, *Life and Leisure in Ancient Rome* (London: Bodley Head, 2002), 112–13.
- 88 I do not mistake delivery in public reading for delivery in oratory, but rather insist that training from oratory would necessarily bleed over into proper public reading. See further Chapter Two below.
- 89 On this role for the lector, see "Oral Performance as an Ancient Necessity and Skill" in Chapter Two below. Pliny models a similar hope for his lector, Voconius Romanus, who will perform a reading of one of his speeches: "I only wish that the reader simultaneously attends to the order of topics, the transitions, and the figures of speech" (Atque utinam ordo saltem et transitus et figurae simul spectarentur! *Ep.* 3.13.3).

aids found in some papyri,<sup>90</sup> helped determine appropriate voice intonation and intensity.<sup>91</sup> The result would be a performance experience that was more enjoyable and easier to engage as audience members availed themselves to the rhetorical texture of the narrative.

### *The Audience*

In terms of the constitution of this study's hypothetical performance audience, it would be expedient, and perhaps expected, to speak of a homogenous "implied audience."<sup>92</sup> This "implied audience" might, in turn, be based upon the type of information taken for granted by the Gospel itself (and the sort of information that is explained in the telling of the story), along with the values and ideas communicated to audience members and the sort of characters presented in the narrative. We might then posit which sorts of audience members would likely identify with these characters and use that data to construct the audience. Similarly, we might work from the events in the story world to events in the real world of the first century and note any points of correspondence. Yet audiences and their relationship to a text or a lector are incredibly complicated, and internal textual features do not necessarily tell us about an audience for whom a narrative was performed.<sup>93</sup>

Viewing Mark from the standpoint of performance destabilizes the idea of a homogenous implied audience because it forces us to come to grips with the fact that audiences are inherently diverse. This observation is based upon the literature of early Christianity, as well as empirical research from sociology and psychology. Paul is depicted as proclaiming to people from Jewish descent and God-fearing proselytes, but also to Gentile "outsiders" in Acts (13:13–52). Relatedly, Paul assumes the possibility of unbelievers entering house church assemblies in Corinth (1 Cor 14:22–24). These texts need not represent social reality or any particular audience of Mark's Gospel in order to be instructive; instead, at a foundational level, they serve as a cautionary note for understanding an audience as homogenous. As Kelly R. Iverson writes, "the structure of

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90 On the impact of these distinctive features on public reading, see Nässelqvist, *Public Reading in Early Christianity*, 29–39.

91 On which see Margaret Ellen Lee and Bernard Brandon Scott, *Sound Mapping the New Testament* (Salem, Or.: Polebridge, 2009); Nässelqvist, *Public Reading in Early Christianity*, 119–80.

92 This paragraph is especially indebted to Hartvigsen, *Prepare*, 13–14.

93 For further critique of the notion of an "implied audience," see Hartvigsen, *Prepare*, 13. Cf. Bengt Holmberg, *Sociology and the New Testament: An Appraisal* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 118–44.



the Mediterranean life (i.e., the inclusion of extended family, slaves, laborers, clients, etc.) necessarily meant that many household churches included some who were ‘outsiders’ to the faith but ‘insiders’ from a social perspective.”<sup>94</sup> Aside from the more pronounced differences among audience members’ educational experiences, race, gender, and religion, the infinitely diverse set of personal experiences that create an individual’s identity ensure that each individual in a performance audience responds uniquely. As Bortolussi and Dixon write,

Even if a collectivity could be identified on the basis of obvious, common characteristics, it would never be the case that all members comprising it would share exactly the same values, aspirations, ideas, opinions, or, in short, the same life experience. After we reject monolithic notions of reading publics, we can no longer justifiably believe that the reading experience of all members of any given group will be identical and reducible to intuitive hypotheses about collective responses.<sup>95</sup>

Indeed, the same audience members may experience different responses to the same story performed by the same person when experienced on different occasions.<sup>96</sup>

Given the innate mixed quality of audiences in general, this study adopts a *heterogeneous* hypothetical audience made up of both “insiders” and “outsiders,” both Jews and Gentiles, male and female, adults and children, slave and free, and rich and poor, with varying familiarity with Jewish cultural memory, as well as cultural scripts stemming from the broader Greco-Roman world.<sup>97</sup> To limit the task somewhat, the focus is mainly on the those audience

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94 Kelly R. Iverson, “‘Wherever the Gospel Is Preached’: The Paradox of Secrecy in the Gospel of Mark,” in *Mark as Story: Retrospect and Prospect*, ed. Kelly R. Iverson and Christopher W. Skinner (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 205–06. Cf. David E. Aune, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987), 60. We may also imagine that some of these extended household members (e.g., slaves) may have undergone baptism and were thus “insiders” in appearance, but in reality were (silently) resistant to Jesus movement.

95 Marisa Bortolussi and Peter Dixon, *Psychonarratology: Foundations for the Empirical Study of Literary Response* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 9–10.

96 See further below on “Hearing a Text in Performance” in Chapter Two.

97 The notion of “cultural memory” is ideally suited to this project, which focuses on the understandings of Mark present during a public reading before a diverse audience in the rhetorical culture of the first century of the Common Era. I adopt Jan Assmann’s definition for cultural memory: “that body of reusable texts, images, and rituals specific to each

members familiar with Jewish cultural memory, though major features of the broader Greco-Roman world will by no means be excluded, particularly when they intersect with Mark's narrative in a significant way (e.g., at the baptism and transfiguration).

Further, it is taken for granted herein that early performances of Mark's Gospel were intended to persuade audience members to adopt certain values and beliefs experienced vicariously through the narrative, though the rhetorical texture of the performance will undoubtedly affect various audience members in unique ways based on the intersection of the story with their own experiences, values, and beliefs.<sup>98</sup> Because these individual experiences, values, and beliefs are irretrievable from actual audience members from early performances of Mark, this study focuses on the intersection of Jewish cultural scripts and schemas (primarily stemming from the LXX and related literature) with the story itself, based on the text of the 28th edition of Nestle-Aland, in the context of the rhetorical features of the portrait of Mark's Jesus.

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society in each epoch, whose 'cultivation' serves to stabilize and convey that society's self-image. Upon such collective knowledge, for the most part (but not exclusively) of the past, each group bases its awareness of unity and particularity. Jan Assmann, "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity," trans. John Czaplicka, *New German Critique* 65 (1995): 132. Orig. Jan Assmann, "Kollektives Gedächtnis und kulturelle Identität," in *Kultur und Gedächtnis*, ed. Jan Assmann and Tonio Hölscher (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1988), 15. ("Unter dem Begriff des kulturellen Gedächtnisses fassen wir den jeder Gesellschaft und jeder Epoche eigentümlichen Bestand an Wiedergebrauchs-Texten, -Bildern und -Riten zusammen, in deren »Pflege« sie ihr Selbstbild stabilisiert und vermittelt, ein kollektiv geteiltes Wissen vorzugsweise [aber nicht ausschließlich] über die Vergangenheit, auf das eine Gruppe ihr Bewußtsein von Einheit und Eigenart stützt."). These cultural forms derive from a variety of sources, but all that is left to us from antiquity are texts and material culture. Texts, whether read or heard, in part or whole, form the basis of religious cultural memory. For another approach to the Gospel of Mark in light of Jewish cultural memory, see Kirsten Marie Hartvigsen, *Prepare the Way of the Lord: Towards a Cognitive Poetic Analysis of Audience Involvement with Characters and Events in the Markan World* (BZNW 180; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2012). On cultural memory, see further below on "A Note about Orientation and Terminology" in Chapter One. See also the essays in Astrid Erll, Ansgar Nünning, and Sara B. Young, eds., *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008). Cf. Alan K. Kirk, "Social and Cultural Memory," in *Memory, Tradition, and Text: Uses of the Past in Early Christianity*, ed. Alan K. Kirk and Tom Thatcher, Semeia (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), 1–24; Jan Assmann, *Religion and Cultural Memory: Ten Studies*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006); *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

98 On which, see Chapter Two.

While this may sound identical to an idealized audience, the approach of this study differs in that, while it acknowledges that any ancient audience-centered approach must work from a construct, it nevertheless embraces heterogeneity among diverse audience members. Their irrecoverable personal experiences would have steered them toward a variety of interpretations at the same public reading. It is this diversity to which this study attends in the pages and chapters that follow, drawing on models of information processing from cognitive science as a rubric for which scripts, themes, and schemas would be called to mind.<sup>99</sup> This approach proceeds with the understanding that a skilled lector would compellingly set before the audience the subtle hints and innuendos based on the rhetoric of inference.

### *The Extent of the Performance*

Given the setting at a Christian meal gathering, it is natural to ask how much of the Gospel would have been read in one meeting.<sup>100</sup> It is sometimes maintained that each time Mark's Gospel was performed it would have been performed in its entirety.<sup>101</sup> However, evidence both for brief and extensive public reading sessions are found in antiquity, both in Greek and Roman sources, as well as in Jewish and early Christian contexts. While extended, multi-day public reading sessions were not unheard of, they were presumably rare.<sup>102</sup> At the other end of the spectrum lies the reading of more manageable literary texts in their entirety, or else smaller portions of longer literary texts, which was more common for public reading than reading longer texts in their entirety.<sup>103</sup>

This diversity is borne out in Jewish literature. According to the third century CE Mishnah and Tosephta, Torah reading was performed by several readers in the synagogue, and these readers alternated such that the burden was distributed evenly. However, during some festivals, all of the books of the

99 See further "The Ancient Mind and Modern Cognitive Science" in Chapter One and "Inference Generation in Cognitive Perspective" in Chapter Two below.

100 This section develops largely from Nässelqvist, *Public Reading in Early Christianity*, 108–10.

101 E.g., David Rhoads, "Biblical Performance Criticism: Performance as Research," *Oral Tradition* 25 (2010): 162–63.

102 E.g., Pliny the Younger, *Ep.* 3.18.1–5 chronicles a three-day event in which Pliny read the entirety of his *Pangyricus* among his friends. Likewise, Nässelqvist (*Public Reading in Early Christianity*, 108) draws our attention to an instance recorded by Suetonius in which Emperor Claudius's historical writings were read in full in the manner of public reading (*Claud.* 42.2).

103 See Pliny the Younger, *Ep.* 3.15; 8.21.4; cf. Cic. *Att.* 16.3.1. Classical scholars tend to agree on this point. See, e.g., Kenneth Quinn, "The Poet and His Audience in the Augustan Age," *ANRW* 30.1: 144; Parker, "Books," 209, 323 n. 14.

Megillot (Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, and Esther) were read in their entirety.

As for Christian sources, the most relevant comes from Justin Martyr, who, writing in the middle of the second century, describes how the “memoirs of the apostles [gospels] or the writings of the prophets are read aloud as long as time permits” (1 *Apol.* 67).<sup>104</sup> The point seems to be that, in Justin’s church, the time allowed for reading the scriptures was predicated on the need to begin the meal so that the deacons could take food to members not in attendance and still have time to return home before it was too late.<sup>105</sup> The increased development of the structure of the church meeting may have put greater restrictions upon the reading than it had earlier enjoyed. This practice also would be in keeping with the norm in broader Roman life, in which manageable portions of texts were typically recited, though exceptions would naturally be possible. Thus, it stands to reason that shorter portions of longer texts were probably read with greater frequency. However, entire texts were likely still performed through public reading on special occasions, such as, for example, the first reading of a gospel in a particular community.<sup>106</sup> Yet, Justin is writing in the mid-second century (150–160 CE), at a time when the lector was beginning to develop into a church office, and the meetings during which that lector read, were developing a more robust structure.<sup>107</sup>

While hard evidence for the specific extent to which gospels were read publicly in first- and second-century Christian communities is lacking, a reasonable decision regarding general early Christian practice would then be that a gospel was sometimes read in full, while at other times only excerpts could be managed for the sake of time. Since this study is particularly interested in the development of the characterization of Mark’s Jesus over the course of the entire narrative, it makes sense that our performance will be one in which the Gospel was read publicly in its entirety. In order to delimit the scenario further, let us suppose that this is the first time many in the audience have heard Mark read in its entirety. Of course, some will have prior exposure to the Gospel, and

104 τὰ ἀπομνημονεύματα τῶν ἀποστόλων, ἢ τὰ συγγράμματα τῶν προφητῶν ἀναγινώσκεται μέχρις ἐγχωρεῖ.

105 Alikin, *Earliest History*, 172.

106 Similarly, Nässelqvist, *Public Reading in Early Christianity*, 110.

107 The lector seems to become a minor church office around 200 CE, demonstrated by the shift in language from the less formal, “the one who reads [aloud]” (ὁ ἀναγινώσκων) (Mark 13:14; Rev 1:3; 2 Clem 19.1; Justin, 1 *Apol.* 67) to the “lector” (*lector*; ἀναγνώστης) (Tertullian, *Praescr.* 41; *Didascalia apostolorum* 2.28.5; Hippolytus, *Trad. ap.* 11; Cyprian, *Ep.* 29.2). See further Nässelqvist, “Public Reading,” 98–100.

we may suppose that some bits of the narrative will have reached the community prior to the first public reading of the manuscript,<sup>108</sup> but for many this will be the first time they have heard, “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ . . .” (Mark 1:1).

### *The Ancient Mind and Modern Cognitive Science*

In order to help elucidate different responses to Mark’s Gospel among ancient performance audience members, this study leverages research from the cognitive sciences. In so doing, I hope to be able to reflect something of the innate complexity of the sense making process undoubtedly present among ancient audiences. However, since the applicability of modern and theoretical cognitive research may not be readily apparent, a brief note of explanation seems warranted.

The connection between ancient rhetoric and modern cognitive science is a natural, if initially unsuspecting, one.<sup>109</sup> After all, ancient rhetoricians were attempting to articulate ways of manipulating their audience members’ comprehension, emotions, and behavior; cognitive science, especially as applied to literary response (a subdiscipline called, “cognitive poetics”), attempts to understand empirically how these changes in comprehension, emotion, and behavior work. At a more fundamental level, however, the applicability of modern cognitive studies for understanding audience members living in the first century of the Common Era in the Mediterranean world is grounded in the universal hardwiring of the cognitive structures of the mind.<sup>110</sup> Empirically-based theory from the cognitive sciences suggests that universal mental hardwiring leads all humans to make sense of the world, at the most fundamental level, through a combination of schemas (sometimes called, “frames”) and scripts. A “schema” is a group of knowledge set in an ordered and predictable pattern. For example, in the United States we have a schema for MOVIE THEATRE (large building, with many large screens, where people can pay money to view films, typically in some type of comfortable chair). The term “script” is used for a group of knowledge pertaining to things other than

108 On the effect prior familiarity with Mark’s Gospel may have on audience members experiencing the Markan narrative in the performance, see Chapter Two below.

109 See further Stockwell, *Cognitive Poetics*, 1–14, esp. p. 8.

110 On which, see, e.g., Stanislas Dehaene, *Reading in the Brain: The New Science of How We Read*, Reprint edition. (New York: Penguin Books, 2010); Steven Pinker, *How the Mind Works* (New York: Norton, 2009); idem, *The Language Instinct: How the Mind Creates Language* (New York: Harper, 2007); George Lakoff, *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1987).

objects (e.g., actions).<sup>111</sup> These schemas and their related scripts are linked to entries in a person's "mental lexicon" (on which, see below). These entries are culturally conditioned, but their existence is transcultural; the mental structures are hardwired, but their content is culturally determined.<sup>112</sup>

Based on empirical research,<sup>113</sup> there seems to be little difference in fundamental cognitive processing between, for example, an ancient Greek person and a modern Western individual.<sup>114</sup> As Jocelyn Penny Small puts it, "we differ little in cognitive capacity from Mycenaean man and, if anything, being somewhat later on the evolutionary scale, we should have better equipped brains."<sup>115</sup> For example, A. R. Jensen has presented convincing evidence that *Homo sapiens* in every culture process information using the same cognitive processes, reflecting apprehension, discrimination, and encoding of stimuli, storing stimuli in a limited (finite) working memory for processing, as well as storage of acquired knowledge in long-term memory. Across cultures, Jensen found, "Individual differences in these tasks can be measured *only in terms of the speed* with which the underlying processes occur, as represented by reaction

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111 See further William Croft, D. Alan Cruse, and William Croft, *Cognitive Linguistics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 7–39.

112 See, e.g., Benjamin K. Bergen, *Louder Than Words: The New Science of How the Mind Makes Meaning* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2012), 175–93; Lakoff, *Women*, 58–76, 121–25, 266–68, 282–83.

113 E.g., Both people living in the Arctic desert and the African bush, much like those of us living in the West, filled in meaning left ambiguous in line drawings. See further John W. Berry, "Ecology and Socialization as Factors in Figural Assimilation and the Resolution of Binocular Rivalry," *IJPsych* 4 (1969): 271–80. See further A. R. Jensen, "Speed of Information Processing and Population Differences," in *Human Abilities in Cultural Context*, ed. S. H. Irvine and J. W. Berry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 105–45. See also, Ian R. L. Davies et al., "A Cross-Cultural Study of English and Setswana Speakers on a Colour Triads Task: A Test of the Sapir—Whorf Hypothesis," *BJP* 89 (1998): 1–15.

114 In fact, some research suggests that certain "Western"-specific elements of cognitive processing that differ with "Eastern" tendencies may be due to longstanding cultural differences that are rooted in ancient Greek and Chinese culture. See Richard E. Nisbett, *The Geography of Thought: How Asians and Westerners Think Differently . . . and Why* (New York: Free Press, 2004). The important corollary would be that, whatever differences exist among cultures beyond the foundational hardwiring, modern research undertaken in the West shares foundational cultural elements with the ancient Mediterranean culture shared by the audience members.

115 Jocelyn Penny Small, *Wax Tablets of the Mind: Cognitive Studies of Memory and Literacy in Classical Antiquity* (London: Routledge, 1997), 4.

times under varying task conditions” (emphasis mine).<sup>116</sup> The reason for this is that, apart from one’s culture, “the conscious brain acts as a one-channel or limited-capacity information-processing system which can deal simultaneously with only very limited amounts of information.”<sup>117</sup> Thus, while certain differences may exist, the basic framework is hardwired.

This universality of cognitive processing is bound up with the biological (neural) structures of the human brain, itself the product of many millions of years of evolution. Paul MacLean estimates that some brain regions in modern humans first appeared in human ancestors nearly half a billion years ago.<sup>118</sup> Steven Pinker draws attention to this fundamental consequence of sexual reproduction in his *How the Mind Works* (New York: Norton, 2009).

Natural selection is a homogenizing force with a species; it eliminates the vast majority of macroscopic design variants because they are not improvements. Natural selection does depend on there having been variation in the past, but it feeds off the variation and uses it up. That is why all normal people have the same physical organs, and why we all surely have the same mental organs as well. There are, to be sure, microscopic variations among people, mostly small differences in the molecule-by-molecule sequence of many of our proteins. But at the level of functioning organs, physical and mental, people work in the same ways. Differences among people, for all their endless fascination to us as we live our lives, are of minor interest when we ask how the mind works. The same is true for differences—whatever their source—between the averages of entire groups of people, such as races.<sup>119</sup>

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116 Jensen, “Speed,” 145. The similarity of cognitive capacity is suggestive of the use of similar cognitive processing (on which see below). These conclusions are borne out by observational research among Philippine natives and !Kung people, whose memory does not differ in potency from the Western anthropologists among them, but rather it differs in selectivity. That is, indigenous peoples may find some data easier to recall than others, but while they differed from the anthropologists on which particular content was easiest to recall, their memory capacity (and thus the associated cognitive processes) did not differ substantially from the Western anthropologists. See further Michael Cole and Sylvia Scribner, *Culture and Thought: A Psychological Introduction* (New York: John Wiley, 1974), 138.

117 H. J. Eysenck, “The Biological Basis of Intelligence,” in *Human Abilities in Cultural Context*, ed. S. H. Irvine and J. W. Berry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 101.

118 Paul D. MacLean, *The Triune Brain in Evolution: Role in Paleocerebral Functions* (New York: Plenum, 1990).

119 Pinker, *How the Mind Works*, 49.



In other words, the biological structures that determine cognitive processing are fundamental to the human species; culture plays little, if any, role in determining basic mechanisms of information processing, like working memory's ability to store and retrieve from long-term memory, etc.<sup>120</sup> Developments in cognitive science thus provide another anchor, complementary to Hellenistic rhetoric and poetics, for evaluating ancient texts and approximating the oral/aural experience of first-century Mediterranean audiences.<sup>121</sup>

This universality in cognitive structures, or mental organs, is also reflected in the development of human languages, all of which converge in a structural sense; nearly every language reflects some manner of the subject-verb-object communication model, even when word order does not follow English conventions. The most likely explanation for this is that all people have the same processing constraints since our working memory is limited by biological constraints.<sup>122</sup> Rather than language *determining* thought processes (à la the older Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis),<sup>123</sup> there is now large agreement among cognitive scientists that thought processes are largely universal and independent of any specific language.<sup>124</sup> Compelling evidence for this comes from children

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120 See further Pinker, *How the Mind Works*, 3–148. Cf. idem, *The Language Instinct*, 403–30.

121 I am certainly not the first to make use of cognitive science for understanding ancient texts. For example, Kristen Marie Hartvigsen has recently leveraged cognitive theories of audience identification and mental simulation of narratives in her monograph, *Prepare*.

122 See further Hartvigsen, *Prepare*, 83–125.

123 Proponents of the Sapir-Whorf Hypotheses of linguistic determinism and linguistic relativity may demur that the different linguistic structure of Hellenistic Greek and Latin casts doubt on the applicability of modern cognitive science, which is based largely on empirical research that typically involves Westerners. Linguistic determinism holds that people's thoughts are determined by the categories made available by their language, whereas the weaker version of the hypothesis, linguistic relativity, states that the difference among languages causes differences in the thought processes for the speakers of those languages. On the latter, see the essays in John J. Gumperz and Stephen C. Levinson, eds., *Rethinking Linguistic Relativity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

124 Whether a person speaks English or Chinese or Apache or Latin or ancient Greek, her or his thoughts may not be formulated in a silent version of the spoken language, which controls categories of thought, but in a "language of thought" that is then translated into a spoken language (Pinker, *The Language Instinct*, 81). A classic example of the existence of this language of thought is found in pre-verbal children, who, were it not for the existence of their preexisting "thought language," would be unable to learn language in the first place. Thus, it seems that at least the strong version of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis has the direction of influence backward: universal neural mechanisms and circuitry, rather than our native language, constrain the manner in which we think. Those coming from a linguistic, rather than predominantly cognitive scientific, perspective, perhaps predictably,



born deaf who spontaneously invent their language, as well as the deaf adult occasionally found that lacks any form of language whatsoever, yet still demonstrates many abstract forms of thinking.<sup>125</sup> Despite the fervency of the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, “there is no scientific evidence that languages dramatically shape their speakers’ ways of thinking.”<sup>126</sup>

The key word here is “dramatically.” It has been demonstrated conclusively that a “weak” derivative form of Sapir-Whorf, known as linguistic relativism, has basis in the empirical findings. Linguistic relativism suggests that culture and language does have some effect on our thinking, but not in a determinative sense.<sup>127</sup> Language and culture influence thought, but not in ways that render it completely unique from culture to culture.<sup>128</sup> In the words of cognitive linguist, Bernd Heine:

[H]uman beings, irrespective of whether they live in Siberia or the Kalahari Desert, have the same intellectual, perceptual, and physical equipment; are exposed to the same general kinds of experiences; and have the same communicative needs. One therefore will expect their languages and the way their languages are used to be the same across geographical and cultural boundaries.<sup>129</sup>

Heine goes on to allow that this universalist perspective does not render a relativist perspective null.<sup>130</sup> Rather it places the relativity in perspective: the diversity of thought, as influenced by culture and language, is relatively small

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disagree. For a neo-Whorfian linguistic perspective that is set in dialogue with Pinker, see Stephen C. Levinson, *Space in Language and Cognition: Explorations in Cognitive Diversity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). For an extended and forceful critique of the Sapir-Whorf Hypotheses, see Pinker, *The Language Instinct*, 55–82. Cf. Jerry A. Fodor, “Précis of The Modularity of Mind,” *BBS* 8 (1985): 5. For a recent critique of the “thought language” hypothesis in favor of embodied cognition, see Bergen, *Louder Than Words*.

125 Pinker, *The Language Instinct*, 67–68.

126 Pinker, *The Language Instinct*, 58. See further Davies et al., “Cross-Cultural,” 1–15.

127 See Bernd Heine, *Cognitive Foundations of Grammar* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 10–14.

128 On which, see Lila Gleitman and Anna Papfragou, “Relations between Language and Thought,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Psychology*, ed. Daniel Reisberg (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 504–23; Yuri Miyamoto and Brooke Wilken, “Cultural Differences and Their Mechanisms,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Psychology*, ed. Daniel Reisberg (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 970–86.

129 Heine, *Cognitive Foundations*, 10–11.

130 Heine, *Cognitive Foundations*, 11–14.

(e.g., spatial orientation or color perception) and hemmed in on all sides by the universal cognitive structures that determine encoding (information processing), meaning making, storing, retrieval, and manipulation of information.

Since culture only plays a relative role in influencing thought,<sup>131</sup> there is no reason why research from the sciences of the mind should not help inform our reasoned conclusions concerning the aural-narrative experience of ancient Mediterranean audiences. This is especially the case, since the relevant cognitive theory and research uses (hardwired) information processing systems to understand the (culturally-conditioned) appropriation of schemas and scripts that will be most likely triggered by Mark's Gospel.<sup>132</sup> Moreover, these insights from relevant empirical research from the cognitive sciences bolster and extend what we find in the ancient records; namely, hearing a narrative, especially communally, presents certain distinctive challenges and benefits when compared to private, silent reading by individuals. The cognitive sciences go a long way toward explaining how and why these factors arise.<sup>133</sup>

### *A Note about Orientation and Terminology*

This study draws upon both representational and connectionist (parallel distributed processing) models from cognitive science to articulate the influence of the rhetoric of inference among audience members.<sup>134</sup> The language

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131 The precise measure of influence is debated. For recent work embracing influence of language on the way meaning is constructed, see Bergen, *Louder Than Words*. For recent work minimizing the influence of language on thought (perhaps the most adamant of such works), see Pinker, *The Language Instinct*. It is important to note, however, that neither side denies that basic information processes, like those described above, are hardwired and biologically constrained. Rather, what is debated is what happens to the information that is encoded and stored, based on the faculties available to the person based on either their dependence upon, or independence from, their native language.

132 On which, see further below.

133 For a cognitive scientific account of the universal workings of the "mental organs," see Pinker, *How the Mind Works*. For an application of neurobiology to emotional response to literature and art, with special attention to universal cognitive structures, see Patrick C. Hogan, *Cognitive Science, Literature, and the Arts: A Guide for Humanists* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 160–90.

134 Broadly speaking, "representationalism" refers to a model of cognition that focuses on the relationship between schemas, prototypes, and working memory to make sense of incoming information, whereas "connectionism" highlights connection strengths and activation thresholds to delineate what is perceived by a person in response to the encoding of incoming information. These models, used wisely, are complementary rather than mutually exclusive. See further Patrick C. Hogan, *Cognitive Science, Literature, and the Arts: A Guide for Humanists* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 7–28, 42–58. Cf. Jonathan S.

of “activating” or “priming” (partially activating) used throughout this study is technical terminology from information transfer theory, particularly related to information processing based in the cognitive structure commonly called the “mental lexicon.”<sup>135</sup> When a person hears, or otherwise experiences, terms, scripts, schemas, matrixes, and themes, an uncontrollable scan is unconsciously made of the mental lexicon in order to understand the information. The direct matches are “activated,” that is, recruited from long-term memory to working memory for manipulation in the construction of meaning. This primary activation tends to cue related terms, scripts, etc. Likewise, terms that are “content addressable” to entries in the mental lexicon may be activated in the same way as identical matches. Alternatively, partial matches are “primed,” that is, partially activated and thus more accessible and more easily activated than entries in the mental lexicon that are merely latent in long-term memory.<sup>136</sup> The individual hearer will then, often unconsciously, choose one particular schema or script to apply to the narrative in order to understand a given scene; while many scripts may be activated, only one will be used for initial sense making.<sup>137</sup> When it comes to non-consciously sorting out what meanings to assign a word via a schema or script, it “has been shown that the contextually inappropriate meanings of the word are quickly dampened; activation of inappropriate meanings seem to decay within around 750 msec from the processing of the word.”<sup>138</sup> The processes involved in sense making happening in the blink of an eye, but this study attempts to deal with them below whenever relevant.

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Spackman and Stephen C. Yanchar, “Embodied Cognition, Representationalism, and Mechanism: A Review and Analysis,” *JTSB* 44 (2013): 46–79.

135 For the sake of lexical variety, I will use also “to trigger,” “to cue,” and the like to describe the process of activation of terms, scripts, schemas, and themes from the minds of audience members.

136 Hogan, *Cognitive Science*, 48–58.

137 See further Morton Gernsbacher and Michael P. Kaschak, “Text Comprehension,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Psychology*, ed. Daniel Reisberg (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 462–74.

138 Gernsbacher and Kaschak, “Text Comprehension,” 468. On the reliability of selection and suppression of activated scripts and schemas in sense making, see Morton Ann Gernsbacher and Mark Faust, “Skilled Suppression,” in *Interference and Inhibition in Cognition*, ed. F. N. Dempster and C. N. Brainerd (San Diego, CA: Academic Press, 1995), 295–327. Given complexity of these processes, and the speed with which they occur, there is a necessarily heuristic element to this aspect of my approach; it is, I believe, nevertheless instructive.

For the purposes of this study, the most important repository of scripts, schemas, and streams of tradition are those from what memory theorists call “cultural memory.”<sup>139</sup> Since there is some debate in the field when it comes to specific terminology, a few comments are in order before proceeding.

“Cultural memory” refers to “the characteristic store of repeatedly used texts, images and rituals in the cultivation of which each society and epoch stabilizes and imports its self-image; a collectively shared knowledge of preferably (yet not exclusively) the past, on which a group bases its awareness of unity and character.”<sup>140</sup> This “characteristic store” may come from religion, the arts, and history, and are the sorts of things that we may think of as being housed in “monuments, museums, libraries, archives, and other mnemonic institutions.”<sup>141</sup> For our purposes, we focus particularly on cultural memory recorded in the form of sacred and secular texts.<sup>142</sup> The core set of texts that form a group’s cultural memory are their “canon,” whereas those texts which prevent certain memories from being forgotten, but are not “canon” may be thought of as “archive.” Thus, as Aleida Assmann has put it,

Cultural memory, then, is based on two separate functions: the presentation of a narrow selection of sacred texts, artistic masterpieces, or historic key events in a timeless framework [canon]; and the storing of documents and artifacts of the past that do not at all meet these standards but are nevertheless deemed interesting or important enough to not let them vanish on the highway to total oblivion [archive].<sup>143</sup>

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139 Modern cultural memory studies can be traced to the work on *mémoire collective* (collective memory) by Maurice Halbwachs in the 1920s. For a detailed discussion of the “invention” of the concept of cultural memory, see Dietrich Harth, “The Invention of Cultural Memory,” in *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, ed. Astrid Erll, Ansgar Nünning, and Sara B. Young (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 85–96.

140 Assmann, “Kollektives Gedächtnis,” 15.

141 Jan Assmann, “Communicative and Cultural Memory,” in *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, ed. Astrid Erll, Ansgar Nünning, and Sara B. Young (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 111.

142 One could profitably approach Jewish cultural memory from the perspective of non-text-based ritual, but doing so in this setting would move beyond the particular scope of this study.

143 Aleida Assmann, “Canon and Archive,” in *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, ed. Astrid Erll, Ansgar Nünning, and Sara B. Young (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 101.

In terms of Jewish literature, at least with reference to those members of the audience who are Hellenized Christian Jews, we may think of the LXX as “canon” whereas the host of other literature with which they are familiar would serve as “archive.” Naturally there is a heuristic element in this distinction; however, since both “canon” and “archive” are part of “cultural memory,” whether a certain text falls into “canon” or “archive” will not make much difference. Texts, schemas, and scripts from cultural memory (whether canon or archive) will be primed and/or activated by allusive language throughout the performance of Mark’s Gospel. While specific texts from the LXX may be primed or activated, very often what will be triggered are schemas and scripts associated with, or derived from, particular texts *whether or not a specific text is recruited into the working memories of certain audience members*.<sup>144</sup>

Consider what would happen when a person in the audience hears the word, *χριστός* (cf. 1:1; 8:29; 14:61). Hearing this term will activate the person’s entry for *χριστός*, which will prime other information related to the word. Those entries associated with Jewish cultural memory might be an anointing of a ruler, a Davidic messianic figure, and so on. In turn, schemas and scripts associated with various expectations for Davidic messiahs and kings, and even emperors from broader Roman cultural memory might be primed or activated. Subsequently, through what is often unconscious processing, individual audience members would side with one particular script or schema (messiah, king, emperor, etc.). However, the other scripts, which are not selected, will remain available in working memory to inform later interpretation upon further reflection. Likewise, the reference to the “prophet Isaiah” (ἐν τῷ Ἡσαΐα τῷ προφήτῃ) in Mark 1:2–3 may activate scripts associated with both prophets in general, as well as the particular prophet, Isaiah. In turn, this activation might prime or activate other prophets from Israel’s cultural memory, such as Amos, Malachi, and Micah.<sup>145</sup> In this case, since “Isaiah” is specified, he is the prophet that will presumably be selected by audience members, but the mention of him will bring the others to working memory. As we shall see in Chapters Three to Six, from the perspective of cognitive sciences, the rhetoric of inference (see Chapter Two) works by subtly priming and activating scripts and

144 On the relationship between cultural memory and the activations of related schemas and scripts within individual hearers, see Has J. Markowitsch, “Cultural Memory and the Neurosciences,” in *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, ed. Astrid Erll, Ansgar Nünning, and Sara B. Young (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), 275–84.

145 For further discussion of representationalism, as well as the activation and priming of the mental lexicon, see Hogan, *Cognitive Science*, 42–58.

schemas associated with David and Yahweh in ways that encourage the dual assimilation of Mark's Jesus to both figures. Some episodes will activate scripts for Yahweh, whereas others will trigger those associated with David. The net result will be *kyriotic* sonship.

### *My Imagination and its Limitations*

Naturally, I make no claims that the reading of Mark's Gospel in Chapters Three to Six is anything other than a hypothetical (re)construction based on the intersection of Mark with my own research filtered, ultimately and unavoidably, through my own set of unique personal experiences, values, and beliefs. When I write, in the chapters that follow, that this or that script or schema "may" or "might" be primed or activated, I mean just that and leave open the possibility that the script or schema will lie dormant.

I write as an American male scholar, shaped by his particular upbringing and education, making sense of Mark's narrative portrait of Jesus vis-à-vis David and God from a particular subset of ancient rhetorical theory. Other renderings are certainly possible, and, indeed, consulting other Markan scholars—along with a breadth of literature from ancient rhetoricians to modern cognitive scientists and psychologists—has served to broaden my horizons and clarify alternatives that my own imagination could not otherwise envisage. Yet, try as I might, I am left with my own reading of Mark.

### Conclusions

While much has been written on Mark's Jesus, there remains a glaring lacuna concerning the potential benefit of ancient rhetoric to elucidate the portrait of the Gospel's protagonist, especially when set in the oral/aural context of the first century. One area where redressing this desideratum may be particularly profitable concerns the question of the relationship between Mark's Jesus to David and God. This study embraces a predominantly oral/aural context for the experience of the narrative, rather than a literary one, in an attempt to most faithfully account for the way the rhetoric of inference would have engaged first-century performance audiences.

This study adopts a house church meeting taking place somewhere in the Roman Empire as the performance setting and thus tries to do justice to a mixed (albeit hypothetical) audience, diverse in terms of race, gender, education, and religion. Many in this audience will experience Mark's Gospel for the first time as it is read aloud in its entirety, but some will have prior familiarity. The result is that diversity will reign in this reading of Mark's portrait of Jesus

as the *kyriotic* Son. Just as there is no monolithic interpretation in a theatre audience, book club, or discussion group, the audience produces a variety of interpretations of single texts occasioned by the varied exposure and familiarity with Jewish cultural memory, along with scripts and schemas derived from the broader Roman culture.

This diversity, however, does not suggest chaos. As we shall see, a general pattern in the activations of cultural scripts will be discernible over the course of the narrative. But before we can turn to Mark's Gospel to begin our exploration, we must first detail the ancient art of encouraging audience inference in the context of the public reading event. Thus, as the voice crying in the wilderness, Chapter Two will prepare the way for our discussion proper of the development of Jesus's characterization as the *kyriotic* Son across the entirety of the Gospel of Mark.

## Performance, Inference Generation, and Narrative Persuasion

My construal of Mark's Jesus is heavily dependent upon the twin media aspects of performance and rhetoric in the first century.<sup>1</sup> It is therefore necessary to ground the oral/aural contours of performance, along with the rhetoric of inference, in the available data from ancient rhetorical handbooks and literature, along with modern cognitive studies on inference generation and narrative persuasion, in order to best envision the distinctive experience hearers would have enjoyed as part of an audience for a delivery of Mark's Gospel.

### On Performing Texts and Hearing Them

When compared to the act of silent reading, hearing a text introduces a variety of factors that compete for one's attention and short-term memory. These

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- 1 The notion of approaching New Testament narratives from the perspective of "performance," has recently been challenged by Larry Hurtado, who takes aim at what he believes are a number of "oversimplifications (and so distortions) of relevant historical matters" related to the "composition and use of texts in early Christianity" by some performance critics. See Larry W. Hurtado, "Oral Fixation and New Testament Studies? 'Orality', 'Performance' and Reading Texts in Early Christianity," *NTS* 60 (2014): 321–40, quoting 323. While this is not the stage for a full response to Hurtado, I am struck by the fact that, in my own experience at the performance workshops and sections at the Society of Biblical Literature annual meetings, performance critics are an eclectic bunch with Hurtado's criticisms touching the work of only some. I agree with Hurtado that public reading was probably the most prevalent mode of oral delivery, but see no reason to jettison the "performance" terminology given the care and training that went into developing effective lectors and preparing a manuscript for delivery—including attention to dramatic pauses and proper intonation. These factors suggest that public reading was thoroughly grounded in the rhetorical training of the day, even though manuscripts were in use. Further, attention given to proper delivery in public reading was different in degree but of the same kind as in oratory and theatre. See the lively and enlightening exchange between Hurtado and Iverson over his original article ("Oral Fixation"): Kelly R. Iverson, "Oral Fixation or Oral Corrective? A Response to Larry Hurtado," *NTS* (2016): 183–200; Larry W. Hurtado, "Correcting Iverson's 'Correction,'" *New Testament Studies* 62 (2016): 201–06. For the most complete treatment of public reading in antiquity to date, see Dan Nüsselqvist, *Public Reading in Early Christianity: Lectors, Manuscripts, and Sound in the Oral Delivery of John 1–4*, *NovTSup* 163 (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 1–118.



factors, in turn, impede one's ability to track narrative threads, hear complex allusions, and form one's own opinions in the context of the collective hearing experience shared by all who are present.<sup>2</sup> Before discussing these issues in detail, however, we must begin with oral delivery itself.

### *Oral Delivery as an Ancient Necessity*

Literacy rates have been estimated to reach no more than fifteen percent in the first century.<sup>3</sup> Of course, relative illiteracy to the written word did not preclude the masses from participating in literate society, since they could *listen* to books read aloud, and, in so doing, interpret them.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, the existence of graffiti on the walls of Pompeii, some of which comes from literary texts, like Vergil's *Aeneid*, is suggestive that some "lower class" members of society had at least cursory ability to reproduce lines in their own hand.<sup>5</sup> Yet copying simple

2 On interference, in general, as well as that introduced by other audience members, see further below.

3 William V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), 283; Pieter J. J. Botha, "Greco-Roman Literacy as Setting for New Testament Writings," *Neot* 26 (1992): 199; William D. Shiell, *Reading Acts: The Lector and the Early Christian Audience*, BibInt 70 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 11–14. See also, Brian Stock, *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983); Brian V. Street, *Literacy in Theory and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Rosalind Thomas, *Oral Tradition and Written Record in Classical Athens* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); *Literacy and Orality in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Harry Y. Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1995), 2–10; Richard A. Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story: The Politics of Plot in Mark's Gospel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 53–55. Cf. Allan Millard, *Reading and Writing in the Time of Jesus* (New York: New York University Press, 2000); Catherine Hezser, *Jewish Literacy in Roman Palestine* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001).

4 Shiell, *Reading Acts*, 14.

5 J. L. Franklin Jr., "Literacy and the Parietal Inscriptions of Pompeii," in *Literacy in the Roman World*, ed. Mary Beard, Alan K. Bowman, and Mireille Corbier (Ann Arbor: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 1991), 77–98; Kristina Milnor, "Literary Literacy in Roman Pompeii: The Case of Vergil's *Aeneid*," in *Ancient Literacies: The Culture of Reading in Greece and Rome*, ed. William A. Johnson and Holt N. Parker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 288–319. However, to say that this amounts to evidence that "suggests widespread literacy" (so Hurtado following Franklin) underappreciates the inherent complexity of defining literacy itself. Scrawling a line or two from the *Aeneid* (which may have been acquired through hearing) is not the same as being capable of mastering the *Aeneid* itself for reading, whether privately or publicly. Moreover, that the graffiti in Pompeii is predominantly from the *Aeneid* is perhaps predictable since beginning students seem to have learned Latin from the Vergilian epic, predominantly from the first two Books (where the majority of the Pompeii graffiti comes from). Thus, it would be easy to place too much weight on the prevalence of Vergilian graffiti

sentences, even from memory, is a far cry from reading a manuscript (publicly or privately).<sup>6</sup> Rather, the overwhelming relative illiteracy of the Greco-Roman world suggests that, if a narrative was to be understood by most in society, it had to be read aloud or otherwise delivered orally.<sup>7</sup> Even for those who could read, books were exceptionally hard to come by, which is why public reading was the main mode of narrative experience, even in upper class circles composed exclusively of literate elite.<sup>8</sup> As we saw in Chapter One, even those with requisite training and funds usually opted for a lector because of the liabilities involved in the public reading process.<sup>9</sup>

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when discussing the potential for “widespread literacy.” Primary school students in America can copy sentences from cursory textbooks, but to call them “literate” in any meaningful sense seems an overstatement. See Hurtado, “Oral Fixation,” 332; Franklin Jr., “Literacy and the Parietal Inscriptions,” 97. For more on the inscriptions and graffiti in Pompeii, see Alison Cooley and Melvin G. L. Cooley, *Pompeii: A Sourcebook* (New York: Routledge, 2004). For more on the difficulty of defining literacy itself, see the discussion in William A. Johnson, “Introduction,” in *Ancient Literacies: The Culture of Reading in Greece and Rome*, ed. William A. Johnson and Holt N. Parker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 1 n. 5. On the likelihood that Vergil was used to teach elementary Latin, see Teresa Morgan, *Literate Education in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 106. In antiquity, see, e.g., Quintilian (*Inst.* 1.8.5), who has beginning students learn to read using Homer and Vergil.

6 So also Nässelqvist, *Public Reading in Early Christianity*, 66–67. The reason for this is that learning to write by copying texts came before specialized training for reading in the *progymnasmata*, which appears relatively late in the curriculum. Reading aloud and hearing texts come at exercises 13 and 14 in Theon’s *Progymnasmata*. The placement is not incidental. *Progymnasmata* 1–12 cover the most elementary exercises (*chreia*, fable, narrative, *topos*, *ekphrasis*, etc.), which prepare students both for reading complex texts from Isocrates, Hypereides, Aeschines, and Demosthenes, but also non-oratorical texts from Herodotus, Theopompus, Xenophon, Philistus, Ephorus, and Thucydides. Only after learning to read at this level were students ready for more complex writing such as paraphrase, elaboration, and contradiction (exercises 15–17). See further Raffaella Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 177.

7 Similarly, Shiell, *Reading Acts*, 14.

8 Nässelqvist, *Public Reading in Early Christianity*, 63–66.

9 See Chapter One above. The educated elite generally tried to avoid laboring on behalf of another person, risking shame and embarrassment, and/or missing out on the pleasure of experiencing a public reading event. Thus, even those capable of reading aloud often chose not to provided they could afford it. See further Nässelqvist, *Public Reading in Early Christianity*, 77–82.

Reading aloud was exceedingly common among those who could read—and chose to do so—even when reading privately.<sup>10</sup> This is not to say that silent reading never happened, but it was the exception, rather than the rule,<sup>11</sup> a tendency reinforced by the use of *scriptio continua* in manuscripts, the burden of which was alleviated by hearing the fluctuations in aural intensity as the reader worked his or her way through a text.<sup>12</sup>

Recitation was also a primary means of publication, particularly in reading communities. Public recitations afforded the author opportunities to augment his or her literary piece based on feedback—both verbal and nonverbal—from the audience, the latter of which was believed more honest.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, since

- 10 See, e.g., J. Balogh, “‘Voces Paginarum’: Beiträge zur Geschichte des lauten Lesens und Schreibens,” *Phil* 82 (1927): 84–109, 202–40; Paul J. Achtemeier, “Omne Verbum Sonat: The New Testament and the Oral Environment of Late Western Antiquity,” *JBL* 109 (1990): 15–17; Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 203–205; Vernon K. Robbins, “Interfaces of Orality and Literature in the Gospel of Mark,” in *Performing the Gospel: Orality, Memory, and Mark*, ed. Richard A. Horsley et al. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006), 126; Kirsten Marie Hartvigsen, *Prepare the Way of the Lord: Towards a Cognitive Poetic Analysis of Audience Involvement with Characters and Events in the Markan World*, BZNW 180 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012), 5–6; Nässelqvist, *Public Reading in Early Christianity*, 63–66.
- 11 Similarly, Whitney T. Shiner, *Proclaiming the Gospel: First-Century Performance of Mark* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity, 2003), 14–16; Hartvigsen, *Prepare*, 5; Nässelqvist, *Public Reading in Early Christianity*, 63–64. The existence of silent reading in antiquity was solidly demonstrated by the work of A. K. Gavrilov, “Techniques of Reading in Classical Antiquity,” *CQ* 47 (1997): 56–73; M. F. Burnyeat, “Postscript on Silent Reading,” *CQ* 47 (1997): 74–76. The discussion was helpfully carried forward by William A. Johnson, “Toward a Sociology of Reading in Classical Antiquity,” *AJP* 121 (2000): 593–627. See further Michael Slusser, “Reading Silently in Antiquity,” *JBL* 111 (1992): 499; Frank D. Gilliard, “More Silent Reading in Antiquity: Non Omne Verbum Sonabat,” *JBL* 112 (1993): 680–94. For examples of reading drama silently, see Tony M. Lentz, *Orality and Literacy in Hellenic Greece* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1989), 159–60. On the prevalence of public reading, see most recently, Nässelqvist, *Public Reading in Early Christianity*, 63–118.
- 12 See further Achtemeier, “Omne Verbum Sonat,” 9–10; Shiell, *Reading Acts*, 10; Wolfgang Raible, *Medien-Kulturgeschichte: Mediatisierung als Grundlage unserer kulturellen Entwicklung* (Heidelberg: Winter, 2006), 100–04; Richard F. Ward and David J. Trobisch, *Bringing the Word to Life: Engaging the New Testament through Performing It* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013), 34–35; Nässelqvist, *Public Reading in Early Christianity*, 84. For a discussion of sound mapping analysis to detect aural intensity, see Margaret Ellen Lee and Bernard Brandon Scott, *Sound Mapping the New Testament* (Salem, Or.: Polebridge, 2009); Nässelqvist, *Public Reading in Early Christianity*, 119–80.
- 13 On the use of performance for publishing texts, see Pliny’s *Epistulae*. For example, writing to Octavius, Pliny encourages his friend to utilize public reading to publish his work. His comments are worth quoting in full as they offer a glimpse into the public reading event:

this feedback was incorporated into future readings no two verbal performances could be expected to be exactly alike. There is thus a sense in which each reading was a distinctive publication, though it must be admitted that each of these “distinctive” performances would have been organically connected by the macrostructure, as well as most of the details, of the narrative, since a complete rewriting would be unlikely. Pliny’s remarks in a letter to Titius Aristo are instructive of these points:

Consequently, these are the reasons why I recite in public, first, because a man who recites becomes a keener critic of his own writings out of deference to his audience, and, secondly, because, where he is in doubt, he can decide by referring the point to his hearers. Moreover, he constantly meets with criticism from many quarters, and even if it is not openly expressed, he can tell what each person thinks by watching the expression and eyes of his hearers, or by a nod, a motion of the hand, a murmur, or dead silence, impressions that mark off clearly enough their real judgment from politeness.<sup>14</sup>

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“However, concerning publishing, do as you please, but at least give some public readings, in order to stir you on to publishing, and that you may see at length how pleased people will be to hear you, as I have, for some time, been bold enough to anticipate on your account. For I picture to myself what a mob there will be to hear you, how they will admire your work, what applause is in store for you, and what a hush of attention. Personally, when I speak or recite I like a hush quite as much as loud applause, provided that the people are quiet, because they are attentive and longing to hear more. (*Ep.* 2.10.6–7; cf. 3.18; 4.7).”

For further discussion, See Loveday Alexander, “Ancient Book Production and the Circulation of the Gospels,” in *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences*, ed. Richard Bauckham (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 86; Hartvigsen, *Prepare*, 6. By “performance,” I refer to single person oral events in which a text is either read aloud from a manuscript or (much less likely) performed from memory. This oral performance could take a variety of forms with varying degrees of bombastic delivery, but in what follows I envision a public reading from a manuscript of Mark’s Gospel that brings to bear the full arsenal of rhetorical training and manuscript preparation that rhetorical education afforded a lector. For this reason, I will often use terms like “performance,” “oral delivery,” and “public reading,” interchangeably to refer to the same performative event, even as I will use “performer” and “lector” interchangeably to refer to the one delivering the public reading performance. On public reading from a manuscript as the preferred mode of oral delivery in the first and second century, see Shiell, *Reading Acts*; Nässelqvist, *Public Reading in Early Christianity*, 63–118.

14 Pliny, *Ep.* 5.3.8–9, Itaque has recitandi causas sequor, primum quod ipse qui recitat aliquanto acrius scriptis suis auditorum reverentia intendit; deinde quod de quibus dubitat,

Pliny continues, on a more personal level, noting that non-verbal audience feedback results in changes to his own literary works, including complete overhauls of certain sections and even omissions, which yield a different experience for audience members with prior exposure to his literary creation.

Indeed, if anyone of my audience members should have the curiosity to peruse the same performance that they hear me read, they may find several things either changed entirely or left out altogether, and perhaps too in accordance with their previous judgment, though they did not say a single word to me.<sup>15</sup>

So public readings provided opportunities for audience feedback, which could then be incorporated in subsequent readings.

This widespread recitation of texts, often in public settings, also helped people who were relatively illiterate to gain exposure to texts from which they would otherwise have been much more insulated.<sup>16</sup> The result is that the first-century Mediterranean world was one in which written texts were designed for oral delivery and aural experience.<sup>17</sup> As Shiell writes, “Texts were written for the purpose of being read aloud.”<sup>18</sup> Or, in Aristotle’s words, “Generally speaking, that which is written ought to be easy to read and easy to speak, which is actually the same thing” (*Rhet.* 3.5.6).<sup>19</sup>

In many ways, the oral/aural aspect of the narrative experience was a function of the culture itself, which, despite its growing reliance on writing to keep an official record, nevertheless also relived its cultural memory by retelling the events in a variety of settings, including common storytelling and public

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quasi ex consilii sententia statuit. Multa etiam multis admonetur, et si non admoneatur, quid quisque sentiat perspicit ex vultu oculis nutu murmure silentio; quae satis apertis notis iudicium ab humanitate discernunt.

15 Pliny, Ep. 5.3.10, Atque adeo si cui forte eorum qui interfuerunt curae fuerit eadem illa legere, intellet me quaedam aut commutasse aut praeterisse, fortasse etiam ex suo iudicio, quamvis ipse nihil dixerit mihi.

16 Similarly, Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 8; Shiner, *Proclaiming*, 39–40; Hartvigsen, *Prepare*, 6.

17 Similarly, Peter Müller, *Verstehst du auch, was du liest?: Lesen und Verstehen im Neuen Testament* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1994), 15–54; Samuel Byrskog, “The Early Church as a Narrative Fellowship: An Exploratory Study of the Performance of the Chreia,” *TTKi* 78 (2007): 208; Hartvigsen, *Prepare*, 6.

18 Shiell, *Reading Acts*, 105.

19 ὅλως δὲ δεῖ εὐανάγνωστον εἶναι τὸ γεγραμμένον καὶ εὐφραστον· ἔστιν δὲ τὸ αὐτό.

reading.<sup>20</sup> For the vast majority of the population (again, no fewer than eighty-five percent), grabbing a book off the shelf to “look something up” was never an option.<sup>21</sup> To be sure, one could inquire about a matter or reflect on their own, but the idea that, for example, “readers” of Mark’s Gospel could pause the reading event and flip to Isaiah after reading Mark 1:2–3 simply does not fit what we know of the experience of those who would make up the (mostly relatively illiterate) audiences of early performances of Mark’s Gospel.<sup>22</sup>

### *Oral Delivery as an Ancient Skill*

As indicated in Chapter One, the lector (ἀναγνώστης) was the recipient of a high degree of rhetorical training.<sup>23</sup> Reading aloud was a skill initially inculcated at the primary level of education and was progressively developed as students ultimately entered declamation at the tertiary stage.<sup>24</sup> Concerning the

20 On the variety of forms of recitation in the Greco-Roman world, see Shiell, *Reading Acts*, 102–36.

21 Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy* (London; New York: Routledge, 2002), 31. See also, Shiell, *Reading Acts*, 10. Cf. Peter J. J. Botha, “Mute Manuscripts: Analysing a Neglected Aspect of Ancient Communication,” *ThEvan* 23 (1990): 40.

22 For more on the performance audience presupposed by this study, see below on a hypothetical performance setting and its mixed audience. See the section “Aural vs. Visual Narrative Experience” for more on the effect of aurality on the experience of a narrative.

23 On the highly trained nature of lectors as members of the *literati* or else slaves trained specifically as lectors, see Nässelqvist, *Public Reading in Early Christianity*, 78–82. Cf. Raymond J. Starr, “Reading Aloud: Lectores and Roman Reading,” *CJ* 86 (1991): 338; John Wight Duff and Anthony J. S. Spawforth, “Anagnôstês,” *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Peter L. Schmidt, “Lector,” *Brill’s New Pauly* (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

24 It is generally agreed upon that there are three stages to Greek and Roman education: primary, secondary, and tertiary. While the earlier works like Henri Irénée Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, trans. George Lamb (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1956); and Stanley Bonner, *Education in Ancient Rome: From the Elder Cato to the Younger Pliny* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), operated from a position of uniformity within, and distinctness among, the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels—including separate classrooms or even schools for each level—more recent work has rightly emphasized the fluidity between each level. See especially Alan D. Booth, “Elementary and Secondary Education in the Roman Empire,” *Florilegium* 1 (1979): 1–14; Morgan, *Literate Education*; Cribiore, *Gymnastics*. Relatively few students, mostly the wealthiest males, progressed all the way to declamation. However, following Booth, Morgan, and Cribiore, the open-style classrooms, integration of upper-level students among the lower-level students, and the popularity of public reading competition all ensure that techniques finely tuned in declamation would have been familiar, if less refined, even among students toward the end of the primary and secondary levels. On the notion that we have tended to overlook the more widespread education of women, particularly with regard to writing

reading of oratory, Theon instructs, “Above all, we shall habituate the student to the practice of fitting voice and gestures appropriately to the subject of the speech.”<sup>25</sup> Importantly, the same high standard set for reading speeches held for reading everything from epics to histories to personal letters.<sup>26</sup> Eventually students learned to engage their audiences through the use of pacing, voice intonation, strategic pauses, and even (muted) gesturing and facial expressions to skillfully guide audiences through the literary piece. Dionysius Thrax (2nd c. BCE) addresses the importance of these skills of reading thusly in his *Tekhne Grammatike*:

Reading (ἀνάγνωσις) is the rendering of poetic or prose productions without stumbling or hesitancy. It must be done with due regard to delivery, prosody, and pauses. From the “delivery” (ὑποκρίσεως) we learn the merit of the piece; from the “prosody,” we learn the art; and from the pauses, the meaning intended to be conveyed. To this end, let us read tragedy heroically, comedy conversationally, elegies thrillingly, epics sustainedly, lyric poetry musically, and dirges in a subdued and mournful manner. Any reading that is done without observing these rules carefully both brings the merits of the poets into disrepute and proves the skills of this particular reader ridiculous.<sup>27</sup>

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and literacy, see Richard Leo Enos and Terry Shannon Peterman, “Writing Instruction of the ‘Young Ladies’ of Teos: A Note on Women and Literacy in Antiquity,” *Rhetoric Review* 33 (2014): 1–20.

- 25 Theon, *Prog.* 13.11–12. Translation is of Patillon’s French translation of the surviving Armenian version of Theon’s *Progymnasmata*. Unfortunately, no Greek of this section survives. “Et par-dessus tout nous l’accoutumerons a avoir une voix et de beaux gestes appropriés aux sujets du discours” (Patillon). See Michel Patillon and Giancarlo Bolognesi, trans., *Aelius Théon: Progymnasmata* (Paris: Les Belles lettres, 1997), 103.
- 26 Theon, *Prog.* 13.27–28, “Our method of training will be the same as in the case of reading the orators” (Notre method d’entraînement sera la meme pour eux que our les orateurs”). Once again, the translation is of Patillon’s French translation of the surviving Armenian version of Theon’s *Progymnasmata*. Unfortunately, no Greek of this section survives. This is not to say there was no difference in the public reading of different genres of literary texts, but that the training was similar and included both voice control and physical aspects of delivery.
- 27 Dionysius Thrax, *Ars Grammatica* 2, ἀνάγνωσις ἐστὶ ποιημάτων ἢ συγγραμμάτων ἀδιάπτωτος προφορά. ἀναγνωστέον δὲ καθ’ ὑπόκρισιν, κατὰ προσωidiάν, κατὰ διαστολήν. ἐκ μὲν γὰρ τῆς ὑποκρίσεως τὴν ἀρετήν, ἐκ δὲ τῆς προσωιδίας τὴν τέχνην, ἐκ δὲ τῆς διαστολῆς τὸν περιεχόμενον νοῦν ὁρώμεν· ἵνα τὴν μὲν τραγωidiάν ἡρωϊκῶς ἀναγνώμεν, τὴν δὲ κωμωidiάν βιωτικῶς, τὰ δὲ ἐλεγεία λιγυρῶς, τὸ δὲ ἔπος εὐτόνως, τὴν δὲ λυρικήν ποιήσιν ἐμμελῶς, τοὺς δὲ οἴκτους ὑφειμένως καὶ γοερῶς. τὰ γὰρ μὴ παρὰ τὴν τούτων γινόμενα παρατήρησιν καὶ τὰς τῶν ποιητῶν ἀρετὰς καταρριπτεῖ καὶ τὰς ἔξεις τῶν ἀναγιγνωσκόντων καταγελάστους παρίστησιν.



However, unlike the delivery of speeches, the public reading of literary texts (whether prose or poetry) does not usually seem to have involved an *elaborate* use of the hands for compelling gestures or *overly augmented* voice inflection (as in the case of *prosopopoeia*).

The avoidance of gestures seems to emerge from both pragmatic and social concerns. On a practical level, at least one of the hands (usually the left) was occupied with the reading process.<sup>28</sup> Yet, lectors were also often concerned to avoid contamination with the *infamia* of singers or actors.<sup>29</sup> Instead of the more engaged active postures expressed in portrayals of orators and actors, the lector is nearly always depicted in paintings and wall art as seated, with a text open before him (usually held in one hand), refraining from exaggerated gestures or dramatic facial expressions.<sup>30</sup> Hence Pliny's comments in a letter to Cerialis about his concern that, when compared to performances with elaborate gestures and dramatic facial expressions, delivery was relatively subdued in recitation:

When a man recites a speech, his eyes and hands—which are the most important aids to delivery—are fettered, and so it is no wonder that the audience's attention becomes languid, when there are no external graces to charm them and no thrills to stimulate them.<sup>31</sup>

If lectors seem to have typically refrained from elaborate gesturing, this does not mean they never used their hand(s) to facilitate delivery; such a conclusion would be unexpected indeed for those so highly trained in oratorical delivery.<sup>32</sup>

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28 Lectors are nearly always pictured with manuscript in hand. For example, see discussion of the *Admetus and Alcestis* wall painting below.

29 See, e.g., Quintilian, *Inst.* 1.8-2-4 (cf. 1.11.3). So also Florence Dupont, "Recitatio and the Reorganization of the Space of Public Discourse," in *The Roman Cultural Revolution*, ed. Thomas Habinek and Alessandro Schiesaro (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 46-47; Donka D. Markus, "Performing the Book: The Recital of Epic in First-Century C.E. Rome," *CLAnt* 19 (2000): 140-44, esp. 144; Holt N. Parker, "Books and Reading Latin Poetry," in *Ancient Literacies: The Culture of Reading in Greece and Rome*, ed. William A. Johnson and Holt N. Parker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 203.

30 Parker, "Books," 203; Nässelqvist, *Public Reading in Early Christianity*, 72-77. But see further below on the *Admetus and Alcestis* wall painting in Pompeii.

31 Pliny, *Ep.* 2.19.1, Recitantium vero praecipua pronuntiationis adiumenta, oculi manus, praepediuntur. Quo minus mirum est, si auditorum intentio relanguescit, nullis extrinsecus aut blandimentis capta aut aculeis excitata.

32 I do not mean to imply that oratory and public reading are the same thing, but rather that one capable of offering gesture-laden performances would not likely leave his or her



As it happens, the pictorial evidence testifies that, while the hands were often fettered with a manuscript, they were not completely shackled. For example, in the famous wall painting from first-century CE Pompeii, *Admetus and Alcestis*, a lector is depicted seated and reading from a manuscript held in his left hand, while gesturing toward Admetus with his right hand.<sup>33</sup> Thus, while Nässelqvist and others are probably correct to restrict the bombastic gestures of orators and actors from the public reading event, we should not rule out gesturing entirely from the task of performing public readings from manuscripts.<sup>34</sup>

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hands completely out of an expressive and skillful public reading. Even if the reading process itself substantially muted the possibility of using one's hands and face, it would not do so absolutely. In this case, we may expect gestures akin to Quintilian's instructions in *Inst.* 11.3, though probably on a muted scale. For the seminal study on the lector's use of gestures in public reading, see Shiell, *Reading Acts*. Contra Hurtado, "Oral Fixation," 321–40; Nässelqvist, *Public Reading in Early Christianity*, 63–118. While Hurtado and Nässelqvist are probably right to challenge the bombastic performances envisioned by many performance critics—especially in the context of a public reading—they too quickly jettison gestures and facial expressions from the public reading event. Even as early on as the *progymnasmata*, students were encouraged to recite the most beautiful lines of works across genres and even store them in memory for recall with appropriate voice and gesture (cf. Theon, *Prog.* 13.17–21). See further Patillon and Bolognesi, *Theon: Progymnasmata*, 167 n. 535.

- 33 Theodor Birt, *Die Buchrolle in der Kunst* (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1907), 131, 133, nr. 73; Roger Ling, *Roman Painting* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 125, fig 127; Shiell, *Reading Acts*, 118, fig 22. Interestingly, this is the same painting to which Hurtado ("Oral Fixation," 335 n. 62) points as evidence *against* gestures in public reading. Presumably he intends it as evidence that lectors are not orators, but this does not by extension necessitate that the hands played no role whatsoever in the delivery. It is not immediately clear whether Admetus and the young lector are discussing the literary work or whether Admetus is reacting to the young lector's reading (which is accompanied by modest gestures). The posture and gestures of the others in the scene would seem to favor the latter. Another first-century CE painting from Herculaneum portrays a lector similarly gesturing with his right hand as he performs a seated public reading. See further Birt, *Die Buchrolle*, 132, nr. 72.
- 34 Another of Pliny's letters provides an additional intriguing possibility concerning the question of gestures in public reading. Anxious about his poor reading of verse, Pliny (*Ep.* 9.43.2) writes his friend, Suetonius, for advice about the possibility of using a lector for his own public reading: "I do not know what I am to do while he is reciting. Should I sit there fixed and mute and like someone at leisure, or as some do (*ut quidam*), should I accompany his recitation (*pronuntiabit*) with murmur, and movement of my eyes and hand?" (*Ipse nescio, quid illo legente interim faciam, sedeam defixus et mutus et similis otioso an, ut quidam, quae pronuntiabit, murmure oculis manu prosequar?*). Untangling this passage rests primarily on the referent of, "*quidam*." If the phrase, "*ut quidam*," refers

While requisite skills for public reading were taught in the classroom—skills that included pacing, intonation, and some measure of appropriate physical delivery—Quintilian ultimately grounds the ability to read a text compellingly

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to the practice of other authors—which seems likely—then some authors were evidently delegating the reading of the manuscript to a trained lector while providing the compelling complementary delivery, a sort of mime of the public reading. Alternatively, if “ut quidam” refers to the practice of some *audience members*, then the situation would be one in which Pliny was obsessing about his role as an audience member to his own public reading and considering whether he should follow along with the lector from his place in the audience. While this latter scenario is not impossible, the former interpretation makes better sense of the fact that the entirety of the letter to Suetonius is taken up with what form the performance should take. Pliny is concerned with the details of his upcoming public reading and not audience etiquette. Pliny’s behavior here has been likened to that of a Roman mime, who by the Imperial period had a written script and acted out its character’s actions while speaking lines—essentially doing what Pliny was proposing he would do, except that Pliny wanted to delegate the reading aspect to his lector.

While I do not opt for split delivery situation for our performance, this passage may supply precedence for staging a more elaborate public reading with two performers, one reading and the other using gestures, facial expressions, and/or mimicry to aid the delivery. While this situation does not seem very common—judging by the seeming lack of extant pictorial evidence for such a scenario—it remains a possibility that early Christians held public readings in a similar fashion. The similarity between the intimate and somewhat informal public reading scenario that awaited Pliny (*recitatio*) and what we know of public reading in early Christian groups strengthens the possibility that something similar could be at play. However, in the absence of evidence, extreme caution should be exercised. Moreover, the situation (at least in Pliny) seems to stem from *authors* present at their own public reading filling out the recitation from a lector with their delivery. Whether or not this practice was adopted for public readings without the original author present is an important question that lies outside the scope of this study. For more on the possibility that Pliny was obsessing over his role as an audience member, see Parker, “Books,” 203 n. 62. On the potential for a connection between Roman mimes and this letter of Pliny, see further Starr, “Reading Aloud,” 338; Kenneth Quinn, “The Poet and His Audience in the Augustan Age,” *ANRW* 30.1: 156. Cf. Pieter J. J. Botha, *Orality and Literacy in Early Christianity*, BPC 5 (Eugene, Ore.: Cascade, 2012), 204. Of course, Roman mimes were also notoriously risqué and crass, but the point is that this type of delivery evidently included public reading to some degree, at least in this instance for Pliny, while also leveraging mimicry. One can think of Roman mime as, in Fantham’s language, “a narrative entertainment in the *media* of speech, song and dance” (154). Classical scholars know relatively little of the Roman literary mime, which highlights an inadequacy in our knowledge of Roman life. See further R. Elaine Fantham, “Mime: The Missing Link in Roman Literary History,” *CW* 82 (1989): 153–63, esp. 154–55. For further discussion of Pliny, *Ep.* 9.34 more broadly, see Starr, “Reading Aloud,” 338; Parker, “Books,” 203 n. 62; Botha, *Orality and Literacy*, 204; Rex Winsbury, *Pliny: A Life in Roman Letters* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 166.

in a genuine understanding of the literary work itself. It is this deep understanding of the text—and not merely deciphering the words written on the roll or papyrus—that needed to be conveyed to the audience:

In reading, it is impossible, save through actual practice, to make it clear how a boy is to learn when to take a fresh breath, where to make a pause in a verse, where the sense ends or begins, when the voice is to be raised or lowered, what inflection should be given to each phrase, and what should be spoken slowly or quickly, excitedly or calmly. Thus, the only advice I can give in this instance, by which he might be able to do all these things, is this: let him understand his text.<sup>35</sup>

Proper delivery of a text was founded on a thorough understanding of it. And this understanding began by decoding the *scriptio continua*. What syllables went together to make a word? Where were the sentence breaks? Where should the vocal intensity increase and decrease? Where should one pause? Where should the emphasis fall?<sup>36</sup> Reflective of this principle is Gellius's complaint when, admitting his ignorance of the meaning of a certain line of the *Satires* of Marcus Varro, he exclaimed his inability to even read the line given his lack of understanding: "How on earth can I read [...] what I do not understand?"<sup>37</sup> To read aloud successfully, one first had to understand the literary text itself. Then—and only then—could that understanding be transferred to the audience through a skillful public reading.

By communicating a particular understanding of the text to audience members, lectors actively guided hearers through the narrative and prompted audience participation. The greater the audience participation, the more favorable audience members would be to a cause under consideration. In this way, audience members were expected to move, even if unconsciously, beyond listening

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35 *Inst.* 1.8.1–2, in qua puer ut sciat, ubi suspendere spiritum debeat, quo loco versum distinguere, ubi claudatur sensus, unde incipiat, quando attollenda vel summittenda sit vox, quo quidque flexu, quid lentius, celerius, concitatus, lenius dicendum, demonstrari nisi in opere ipso non potest. Unum est igitur, quod in hac parte praecipiam: ut omnia ista facere possit, intelligat.

36 Harry Y. Gamble, "Literacy, Liturgy, and the Shaping of the New Testament Canon," in *The Earliest Gospels: The Origins and Transmission of the Earliest Christian Gospels—The Contribution of the Chester Beatty Codex P45*, ed. Charles Horton (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 35; Nässelqvist, *Public Reading in Early Christianity*, 84–88.

37 Aulus Gellius, *Noc. att.* 13.31.5, "'Quonam' inquam 'pacto legere ego possum, quae non adsequor?'"

to a text to identification with the cause and/or plight of the characters.<sup>38</sup> In large part, responsibility for this engagement lay in the lector's delivery, through which he or she conveyed emotions for the audience to experience, primarily by being "moved by them oneself" (*Inst.* 6.2.26).<sup>39</sup> Indeed, it was not uncommon for tragic and comic actors to be brought to tears themselves, which were revealed once the performance had ended and the masks had been removed.<sup>40</sup> While Quintilian's comments specifically address actors, these skills were a foundational part of the act of reading itself, which was inherently a performative event.

While performances of literary texts (both of prose and poetry) most often took place via public reading, students initially learned to commit them to memory. Indeed, during their education, students often learned—and were to eventually master—the art of committing stories, speeches, and even entire epics to memory so that their hands could be free to gesture to engage audience members as fully as possible.<sup>41</sup> Theon writes of the importance of memorizing entire pieces, which enabled a more compelling delivery.<sup>42</sup> Using more vivid language, Quintilian discusses the importance of reading a manuscript over and over in order to master it, metaphorically chewing it to a pulp. This readerly experience is contrasted to the experience of the same piece in performance (a matter to which we will return below):

Reading is independent; it does not pass over us with the speed of an oral delivery, but you can go back over it again and again if you have any doubts or if you want to fix it as a brand deep in your memory. Let us go over the text again and work on it. We chew our food and almost liquefy it before we swallow it, so as to digest it more easily; similarly let our reading be made available for memory and imitation, not in an undigested

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38 Joanna Dewey, "The Gospel of Mark as an Oral-Aural Event: Implications for Interpretation," in *The New Literary Criticism and the New Testament*, ed. Edgar V. McKnight and Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, JSNTSup 109 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1994), 155.

39 Summa enim, quantum ego quidem sentio, circa movendos adfectus in hoc posita ets, ut moveamur ipsi. Similarly, Aristotle, *Poetics* 17; Horace, *Ars Poetica* 101–107; Cicero *De or.* 2.189.

40 Quintilian, *Inst.* 6.2.34–35.

41 For example, Cicero writes, "The memory too must be trained by carefully learning by heart as many pieces as possible both from our Latin writers and Greeks" (*Exercenda est etiam memoria, ediscendis ad verbum quam plurimis et nostris scriptis, et alienis*) (*De or.* 1.34.157). See further Shiner, *Proclaiming*, 104–09.

42 Theon, *Prog.* 13. So also Patillon in Patillon and Bolognesi, *Theon: Progymnasmata*, 167 n. 535.

state, but as it were, softened and reduced to pap by frequent repetition. [...] We must do more than examine everything thoroughly bit-by-bit; once read, the book must invariably be taken up again from the beginning, especially if it is a speech, the virtues of which are often deliberately concealed.<sup>43</sup>

This careful and detailed understanding of the text not only enabled a compelling public reading, but it also enabled the lector to bring out the clever, hidden devices in the narrative for the audience to comprehend. Quintilian writes that the reader (lector) must be careful to note that,

The orator often prepares his audience for what is to come, dissembles, lays traps for them, and says things in the first part of the speech which will prove their value at the end, and are accordingly less pleasurable in their original context, because we do not as yet know why they are said, and therefore have to go back over them when we know the whole text (*Inst.* 10.1.21).<sup>44</sup>

These observations readily carry over to the public reading of narratives, which are likewise adorned with figured speech and similar tactics. For Quintilian, such devices are not readily apparent on a first reading because the rest of the piece is yet unknown.

By thoroughly mastering a text, the lector could bring out the niceties of the narrative that were initially detected by scrutinizing the story and chewing it to pap. The result is a ready aid for audience members to assist their appreciation of a narrative's complexity and nuances of the text in oral performance through public reading (cf. *Inst.* 10.1.20–21).<sup>45</sup> Based on pictorial evidence,

43 Quintilian, *Inst.* 10.1.19–20, *lectio libera est nec actionis impetu transcurrit; sed repetere saepius licet, sive dubites sive memoriae penitus adfigere velis. repetamus autem et retractemus, et ut cibos mansos ac prope liquefactos demittimus, quo facilius digerantur, ita lectio non cruda, sed multa iteratione mollita et velut confecta, memoriae imitatione tradatur. [...] nec per partes modo scrutanda omnia, sed perlectus liber utique ex integro resumendus, praecipueque oratio, cuius virtutes frequenter ex industria quoque occultantur.*

44 *Saepe enim praeparat, dissimulat, insidiatur orator, eaque in prima parte actionis dicit, quae sunt in summa profutura. itaque suo loco minus placent, adhuc nobis quare dicta sint ignorantibus, ideoque erunt cognitae omnibus repetenda.*

45 Quintilian is writing specifically about reading oratory in 10.1.19–21, but figured speech is foundational to all writing (e.g., it fills the pages of Vergil's *Aeneid*), not just oratory. His comments are thus easily transferrable to the reading of narrative.

however, it seems that the ability to memorize texts usually only played a supportive role for lectors as they prepared for the reading event. When they actually performed a public reading of the narrative, they are almost always pictured seated and with the open manuscript or scroll in (typically one) hand.<sup>46</sup> While orators and actors delivered texts from memory, lectors usually read them aloud directly, even if quite skillfully, from manuscripts.<sup>47</sup>

While a full discussion of performance and delivery in antiquity lies beyond the scope of this study, it is important to countenance the reality that first-century audiences experienced narratives mostly through hearing a text read aloud skillfully and expressively, rather than through individual, silent reading. There is no reason to assume that Mark's Gospel should be any different. Otherwise, it is difficult to explain the widespread influence of the Markan narrative, as seen in its role in the composition of Matthew and Luke. Most people would only gain direct exposure to it through an oral performance.

The act of public reading has several significant implications for the present study that should not be overlooked. First, as discussed above, even preparation for the act of reading aloud was characterized by a thorough study of the narrative in order to enhance audience understanding. By carefully understanding the figured speech in narratives, for example, the lector was able to draw out the subtleties of the story on behalf of the audience, whose ability to detect the more subtle narrative devices would otherwise have been somewhat muted by the performance experience.<sup>48</sup> Second, as we shall see immediately below, the shift from a predominantly visual activity (reading) to a predominantly aural activity (hearing) affects audience comprehension of the narrative in a variety of ways, including heightening audience involvement and dampening, though by no means extinguishing, allusions to material both from within the story world and outside of it in the broader shared cultural memory of the first-century Mediterranean world.

### *Aural vs. Visual Narrative Experience*

The aural experience of a narrative presents distinctive variables, challenges, and opportunities for audience members when compared to the visual act

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46 See Myles McDonnell, "Writing, Copying, and the Autograph Manuscripts in Ancient Rome," *CQ* 46 (1996): 469–91, esp. 489; Markus, "Performing," 144; Parker, "Books," 188, 213; Guglielmo Cavallo, "Book," *Brill's New Pauly* (Leiden: Brill, 2013); Nässelqvist, *Public Reading in Early Christianity*, 74–75.

47 Shiell, *Reading Acts*, 39 fig. 2, 80 fig. 18, 118 fig. 22, 129 fig. 24. Cf. Nässelqvist, *Public Reading in Early Christianity*, 74–75.

48 See further below on "Inference Generation in Ancient Rhetorical Theory."

of reading a text. In this section, we are particularly interested in two factors: a performance's continuous temporal flow and the potential benefit of multiple experiences of the same narrative in terms of narrative and allusion comprehension.

### Effects of Temporal Flow of Performance

Long ago, Quintilian noted the difference between experiencing a narrative through performance and through private reading (*Inst.* 10.1.19–20; quoted above). Writing for literate, highly educated people, Quintilian commends reading for its benefits over performance: Reading, unlike performance, puts the recipient of the narrative in control over the pace and progression of the narrative experience. A reader may choose to stop the narrative, either to pause for reflection or to go back to investigate possible cues earlier in the story. Likewise, she or he may scan ahead to see how a certain detail resolves later in the narrative. Further, the text may be set down to discuss with others or to take notes; it may be read from start to finish, from end to beginning, and it can (and should) be started over again from the beginning in order to understand how the story hangs together as a unified whole. As we learned from Quintilian (above), the act of reading is “independent” (*libera*) in that the reader can and should “go back over it again and again” to address any potential misunderstandings or to commit the text to memory.<sup>49</sup> Across genres, texts were to be so worked over that they were internalized, ready for recall at any moment.<sup>50</sup>

As mentioned above, Quintilian's comments are instructive for the sort of narrative experience we might expect the lector to have enjoyed. However, most in the audience were relatively illiterate, and so reading a manuscript of Mark's Gospel, if they were even able to procure one, was out of the question for most of them. For these audience members, their only recourse was to *hear* the text aurally, rather than read it visually. By inverting the reading experience as described by Quintilian, we get a glimpse into his views about the performance experience. Unlike reading, hearing a narrative is an activity dependent upon the lector, who alone controls its pace and delivery. The hearer may not pause,<sup>51</sup> rewind, or fast-forward, and once the performance is finished, there

49 *Inst.* 10.1.19.

50 ... et ut cibos mansos ac prope liquefactos demittimus, quo facilius digerantur, ita lectio non cruda, sed multa iteratione mollita et velut confecta, memoriae imitationique tradatur (*Inst.* 10.1.19).

51 This practice is not unheard of in small doses. For example, Pliny recounts an instance where a lector was stopped to correct mispronunciations in his reading (cf. Pliny, *Ep.* 3.5.12). However, that his uncle protested the pause, citing that the interrupter had



is no way to watch it over again from the beginning—until the narrative is performed again at a later date. But, at that point, there is no guarantee that the same lector will read the text, or, even in this case, that the same lector will read the same text the same way twice.<sup>52</sup>

On the one hand, those in the audience with even primary education in the *progymnasmata* may have been instructed in the art of *listening*. Theon writes, “In listening, the most important feature is to offer frank and friendly attention to the speaker” so that the hearer will be able to “recall the subject of the writing, identify its main point and the arrangement, [and] finally recall also the better passages.”<sup>53</sup> Students are then enjoined to write the narrative down from memory, by sections if it is not possible to record the entirety all at once.<sup>54</sup> While the majority of those in the audience will not likely have had a *progymnastic* education, some are sure to have. Moreover, those lacking formal education will still have been exposed to these practices simply by virtue of being part of a society that so highly prized the oral delivery and its aural experience; that is, they will have learned how to listen by listening to texts in the company of others. Thus, we may expect that audience members were able to follow a great deal—some better than others—when hearing a narrative—even if the experience of a performance event had certain limitations determined by the decisions of the lector and the continuous flow of performance.

Quintilian’s sentiments are confirmed by recent cognitive studies,<sup>55</sup> which suggest that, when a story is experienced aurally rather than visually by reading written words, the temporal flow of the narrative influences *how* the audience

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understood what the lector intended, suggests that stopping a lector during a quality, skillful reading was considered uncouth.

- 52 As discussed above, every performance was tailored to the specific audience before the performer each time a text was delivered, incorporating feedback from previous performances. Cf. Pliny, *Ep.* 5.3.8–10. See further Shiner, *Proclaiming*, 26–30.
- 53 Theon, *Prog.* 14. Translation is of Patillon’s French translation of the surviving Armenian version of Theon’s *Progymnasmata*. Unfortunately, no Greek of this section survives. “Dans les auditions la première chose est de réserver à celui qui parle un accueil franc et amical; sans cela on ne tire aucun profit de ce qui peut être utile. Au début donc il suffit de se rappeler au moins le sujet de la composition, puis les points et la disposition; ensuite de tâcher de se rappeler aussi les passages bien venus.” (Patillon). See Patillon and Bolognesi, *Theon: Progymnasmata*, 105–06.
- 54 Theon, *Prog.* 14.
- 55 Cf. *Inst.* 10.1.19. On the relevance of modern cognitive scientific research for understanding ancient audience responses to narrative, See “The Ancient Mind and Modern Cognitive Science,” in Chapter One above.



experiences the story, particularly in terms of recall of a narrative.<sup>56</sup> Unlike the act of reading, which enables and encourages reflection and review, those listening to spoken narratives must make split-second (and often unconscious) decisions. Listeners must decide whether to reflect on any given detail—and run the risk of losing the narrative thread—or continue to follow the narrative as it develops in the performance—at the risk of forgetting an important detail. While multitasking is an endeavor that many have aspired to, empirical research suggests that one cannot easily listen and reflect simultaneously.<sup>57</sup> Due to biological constraints in the human brain, information in short-term memory may be retained for no more than a few seconds without rehearsal.<sup>58</sup> Of course, one may choose to reflect on a particular scene indefinitely rather than paying attention to the performance, but to do so will have negative consequences for that audience member's comprehension and appreciation of the details of the story.

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- 56 For a full-length cognitive psychological study on the experience and transmission of oral traditions, see David C. Rubin, *Memory in Oral Traditions: The Cognitive Psychology of Epic, Ballads, and Counting-out Rhymes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995). Cf. Karl R. Popper and John C. Eccles, *The Self and Its Brain* (London: Routledge, 1984), esp. 377–406; Alan D. Baddeley, *Human Memory: Theory and Practice* (Hove: Erlbaum, 1990). For studies applying cognitive research to recall in the performance of biblical literature, see Cynthia Edenburg, “Intertextuality, Literary Competence and the Question of Readership: Some Preliminary Observations,” *JSOT* 35 (2010): 131–48; Kelly R. Iverson, “An Enemy of the Gospel? Anti-Paulinisms and Intertextuality in the Gospel of Matthew,” in *Unity and Diversity in the Gospels and Paul: Essays in Honor of Frank J. Matera*, ed. Christopher W. Skinner and Kelly R. Iverson, *SBLCL* 7 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), 7–32.
- 57 See, e.g., Reem Alzahabi and Mark W. Becker, “The Association between Media Multitasking, Task-Switching, and Dual-Task Performance,” *Journal of Experimental Psychology* 39 (2013): 1485–95. Incidentally, research suggests that one's own appraisal of abilities to multitask in this manner is not an accurate predictor of success. See Jason R. Finley, Aaron S. Benjamin, and Jason S. McCarley, “Metacognition of Multitasking: How Well Do We Predict the Costs of Divided Attention?,” *Journal of Experimental Psychology* (2014): 1–8.
- 58 The most recent research suggests that 10–12 seconds is the maximum time information is stored in short-term memory before it must be either discarded or transferred to working memory so that it may be manipulated. See Alan D. Baddeley, Michael W. Eysenck, and Michael C. Anderson, *Memory* (Hove: Psychology Press, 2009), esp. 19–68. See further George A. Miller, “The Magical Number Seven, plus or Minus Two: Some Limits on Our Capacity for Processing Information,” *Psychological Review* 101 (1994): 343–52; Alan D. Baddeley, “The Magical Number Seven: Still Magic after All These Years?,” *Psychological Review* 101 (1994): 353–56.

Therefore, audience members are more likely to pick up broad themes during a performance, unless they actively attend to certain allusions. These themes and scripts are then held in memory for later recall upon activation as the narrative progresses, whereas specific details of distant aspects of Jewish cultural memory are less likely to be activated or primed (partially activated). For example, it will be argued that scripts associated with righteous suffering will have been activated by the portrait of the Markan Jesus in the passion (see Chapter Six). While this schema is likely activated or primed by the mistreatment the Markan Jesus suffers, and especially his final words from the cross, which mimic Ps 21:1 LXX, it is unlikely that the *entirety* of Psalm 21 LXX, with its hopeful ending, will be called to mind for audience members during the performance event.<sup>59</sup> In other words, schemas and scripts from cultural memory, but not the minutiae resulting from *textual* analysis of particular intertexts,<sup>60</sup>

59 *Contra* Holly J. Carey, *Jesus' Cry From the Cross: Towards a First-Century Understanding of the Intertextual Relationship between Psalm 22 and the Narrative of Mark's Gospel*, LNTS 398 (London: T&T Clark, 2009). Carey's arguments are engaged in detail in Chapter Six. Naturally, recalling the entirety of Ps 21 LXX cannot be ruled out after the performance is finished. See further in Chapter Six below. Iverson has drawn similar conclusions on intertextuality in the Gospel of Matthew, objecting to the complex intertextual allusions proposed by David Sim would not plausibly be detected by audience members in a performance of Matthew's Gospel. Such literary artistry is best appreciated in a readerly environment quite foreign to most early experiences of Matthew (and Mark). See Iverson, "An Enemy of the Gospel?," 7–32.

60 This is not to say that detailed recall of stories heard in performance would have been impossible (e.g., the author of Matthew committing Mark's Gospel to exact memory), but it would be exceedingly unlikely, given the universal constraints in place from the limited capacity of working memory. Of course, ancients and modern humans alike have been able to perform extraordinary feats of memory through, for example, the use of the "mind palace," whereby a person stores data in "physical" spaces in a "mental house." Cicero writes of Simonides, who,

inferred that persons desiring to train this natural capacity must select places and form mental images of the facts they wish to remember and store those images in the places, with the result that the arrangement of the places will preserve the order of the facts, and the images of the facts will designate the facts themselves, and we shall employ the places and images respectively as a wax writing tablet and the letters written on it.

Itaque eis qui hanc partem ingeni exercerent locos esse capiendos et ea quae memoria tenere vellent effingenda animo atque in eis locis collocanda: sic fore ut ordinem rerum locorum ordo conservaret, res autem ipsas rerum effigies notaret, atque ut locis pro cera, simulacris pro litteris uteremur. (Cic. *De or.* 2.354 [adapted from Sutton & Rackham, LCL]; cf. 350–360; cf. Quintilian, *Inst.* 11.2).

Yet, even those who have won the modern U.S. Memory Championship admit to having a thoroughly average memory in day-to-day life. In a 2011 interview about his book,

are most likely to be recalled during the temporal flow of a performance of Mark's Gospel.<sup>61</sup> Further, the schemas, themes, and scripts from within the temporal flow of the narrative, not the metanarratives from the intertexts, are what more reliably determine the function and meaning of allusions during the performance event (see further below).

This discussion naturally brings to the surface the question of the effect of multiple hearings of a narrative upon comprehension of said narrative. Put another way, how much does prior exposure to a narrative help one understand the story during the performance event?

### First vs. Multiple Hearings

Given the cultural value of listening carefully, we may imagine that audience members were expected to be engaged participants in the narrative during the performance.<sup>62</sup> Some in the audience will be experiencing Mark's Gospel for the first time, though their connection with this particular house church community suggests some level of familiarity with the story of Jesus, if not *Mark's* Jesus. This group of audience members would naturally experience the narrative as it unfolds before their eyes and ears, and they will be entirely reliant on the storyteller to draw out the subtleties of the rhetoric of the narrative (see below).

Others, however, will have heard Mark's story before, perhaps on several different occasions. These members, we may also imagine, would have likely enjoyed lengthy discussions—in the moments and days following each of the performances—surrounding the different episodes, narrative flow, and the complex portrait of Mark's Jesus. With increasing exposure comes the increasing chance for memorization.

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*Moonwalking with Einstein: The Art and Science of Remembering Everything*, Reprint edition. (New York: Penguin Books, 2011), U.S. Memory Champion (2006), Josh Foer told NPR's *All Things Considered* that he still regularly forgets things: "The sad truth is, I still forget where I parked my car all the time. I still forget why it was that I opened the refrigerator door. I still forget to put down the toilet seat. [...] The thing about these techniques is they only work if you remember to use them. That's sort of the funny thing. You've got to remember to remember." It is not that Foer's brain is extraordinarily capable of recalling data from long-term memory into working memory; it is simply trained for a very specific type of memory. How specific? Foer holds the record for "speed cards," by memorizing a deck of 52 cards in 100 seconds. For the interview, see Joshua Foer, "Memory Champs? They're Just Like The Rest Of Us," *NPR.org*, n.d., <http://www.npr.org/2011/02/23/134003962/Moonwalking-With-Einstein> (accessed July 10, 2016).

61 For further discussion, see below on "Allusion."

62 Maxwell, *Hearing*, 27–40.

Indeed, some ancient rhetors suggested that audience members commit entire performances to memory, as we have already seen from Theon. Additionally, Lucian of Samosata takes it for granted that the most appreciative audiences enjoy speeches by “distinctly remembering the speaker’s words” and “repeating back those lines that are not without refinement.”<sup>63</sup> Likewise, Lucian describes his own practice of memorizing the words he has heard from the philosopher, Nigrinus; he repeats the lines to himself two or three times daily to relive the performance event. In the absence of the actual words he once heard, Lucian likens himself to “a lover, in the absence of his mistress, who recalls some word, some act of hers, dwells on it, and beguiles hours of sickness with her feigned presence.”<sup>64</sup> He concludes that, with his mistress, Philosophy, he gets a similar pleasure by “gathering together the words that [he] heard and unrolling them to [himself].”<sup>65</sup> To be sure, it would be a mistake to conclude that all audience members were either as educated or enthusiastic as Lucian. Yet, his practice nevertheless demonstrates the importance assigned to the memorization of words heard in performance.

Considering this focus on internalization and memorization of public readings, we may expect that members of the audience with prior exposure to Mark’s Gospel may well have (to varying degrees) substantial familiarity with the story and its portrait of Mark’s Jesus—whether or not they had committed scenes (or the entire story) to memory. As such, these audience members would have some interpretive advantage over those uninitiated because they might anticipate, for example, that the nascent *kyriotic* portrait of Mark’s Jesus from the prologue will come to fruition over the course of the performance.<sup>66</sup> Nevertheless, two factors complicate matters for audience members already familiar with Mark’s Gospel.

First, as discussed above, no two performances are exactly alike since the narrative is mediated through the specific storyteller and tailored to the specific audience during each delivery.<sup>67</sup> For example, to anticipate later

63 Lucian, *Dom.* 3, μάλλον δὲ ὡς ἂν τις εὐμαθὴς ἀκροατὴς διαμνημονεύων τὰ εἰρημένα καὶ τὸν λέγοντα ἐπαινῶν καὶ ἀντίδοσιν οὐκ ἄμουςον ποιούμενος πρὸς αὐτά.

64 Lucian, *Nigr.* 7, καὶ ὥσπερ οἱ ἐρασταὶ τῶν παιδικῶν οὐ παρόντων ἔργ’ ἅττα καὶ λόγους εἰρημένους αὐτοῖς διαμνημονεύουσι καὶ τούτοις ἐνδιατρίβοντες ἐξαπατῶσι τὴν νόσον, ὡς παρόντων σφίσι τῶν ἀγαπωμένων—ἔνιοι γοῦν αὐτοῖς καὶ προσλαλεῖν οἴονται καὶ ὡς ἄρτι λεγομένων πρὸς αὐτοὺς ὦν τότε ἤκουσαν, ἤδονται καὶ προσάψαντες τὴν ψυχὴν τῇ μνήμῃ τῶν παρεληλυθότων σχολὴν οὐκ ἄγουσιν τοῖς ἐν ποσὶν ἀνιάσθαι.

65 Lucian, *Nigr.* 7, οὕτω δὴ καὶ αὐτὸς φιλοσοφίας οὐ παρούσης τοὺς λόγους, οὓς τότε ἤκουσα, συναγείρων καὶ πρὸς ἐμαυτὸν ἀνατυλίττων οὐ μικρὰν ἔχω παραμυθίαν.

66 See below in Chapter Three on Mark 1:3; 1:7–8; 1:9–10; 1:12–13.

67 Again, recall the discussion of Pliny, *Ep.* 5.3.8–10 above.

discussion, Mark 15:39 may be performed as either a sarcastic line of derision or an authentic confession of some sort.<sup>68</sup> There is thus no guarantee that previous performances will positively aid the present experience, especially in understanding fine details. This is particularly the case when reflecting upon subtle rhetorical figures, since, although the lector has a high level of rhetorical training, there is no guarantee that previous lectors would, for example, bring out the *emphasis* on κύριος in Mark 1:3 (or anywhere else for that matter) in the same way. Performances are delicate events, a characteristic that may mitigate the importance of previous exposure to the Gospel when thinking of audience impressions of Mark's Jesus.

Second, when an audience member becomes engulfed in the narrative world,<sup>69</sup> she or he tracks with the story as it unfolds in a way that negates prior exposures. Richard Gerrig describes this "anomalous suspense" using *Jack and the Beanstalk*: "Even if we know exactly what will take place (Jack will survive his trip up the beanstalk) and how (by chopping down the beanstalk, thus killing the giant), once we undertake a performance of the narrative world, this information somehow becomes inaccessible."<sup>70</sup> Cognitive research suggests that incoming information competes with just-learned information for scarce cognitive resources, a phenomenon known as interference. That is, the sensory input from the present performance ("cue-overload") tends to block access to prior knowledge ("memory cues" to prior performances).<sup>71</sup> So, for example, the opening line, Ἀρχὴ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ υἱοῦ θεοῦ, will cue previous exposure(s) to Mark's Gospel. However, "retroactive interference" introduced by the temporal flow of the present performance will eventually attenuate any gains provided by those cues.<sup>72</sup>

So the benefit of prior narrative exposure is limited during the actual narrative experience. To be sure, previous exposure is not completely useless,

68 See further in Chapter Six below.

69 On which, see below on "Narrative Persuasion in Cognitive Perspective" below.

70 Richard J. Gerrig, *Experiencing Narrative Worlds: On the Psychological Activities of Reading* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 80.

71 For a discussion of interference theory in relation to oral tradition, see Rubin, *Memory in Oral Traditions*, 147–55. Interference theory is exceptionally complex and space constraints do not make extended discussion of this topic advisable in this setting.

72 In addition to the temporal flow of the present performance itself, other confounding "retroactive interference" would include all the experiences and information learned in the interim between the previous performance(s) of Mark's Gospel and the present one. An overly simplistic way of considering this aspect of "retroactive interference" is to think of it as the cumulative sensory input and cognitive processing that prevents anyone from remembering every detail from a performance.

especially when it comes to reflection after the performance. Prior exposure can also hinder comprehension by making it more difficult to fully participate in the narrative experience thus rendering the new narrative thread more difficult to track. Therefore, while prior exposure may aid in the detection of some allusive scripts, especially after the performance, the details of those scripts are muddled by “retroactive interference” introduced by participation in the narrative. Prior exposure can also make following a new performance of the same narrative more difficult by creating “proactive interference,” through which precious—and *limited*—cognitive resources are recruited when the previous performance(s) are recalled.<sup>73</sup> By contrast, those new to the narrative are able to participate in the narrative more fully and more readily, because they are free to enjoy the narrative with less interference.

Therefore, Quintilian’s sentiments concerning the benefits of reading over performance discussed above could be paraphrased through the lens of interference theory:<sup>74</sup> in reading, unlike in a performance, one can control the immediate elements of retrospective interference by pausing to reflect on previous exposure to the narrative. In performance, however, one cannot stop or pause the retrospective interference. Yet, research does suggest that when the schemas and scripts from cultural memory line up with certain aspects of a performance, the activation of those previously known scripts and schemas can be anticipated.<sup>75</sup> We will encounter this phenomenon, commonly referred to as allusion, in the activation of scripts from previous experiences of—or earlier episodes from—Mark’s Gospel (part of early Christian cultural memory in its own right<sup>76</sup>), as well as scripts from outside of Mark, found in the LXX and the broader Greco-Roman world.<sup>77</sup>

How do these findings affect how our approach to Mark’s Gospel? Subsequent chapters focus on how those initially unfamiliar with the story would likely have understood the narrative. However, attention is also given to the

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73 “Proactive interference” refers to “interference that occurs before an item is learned,” whereas “retroactive interference” is a technical term that refers to “interference that occurs between the time an item is learned” and when it is recalled Rubin, *Memory in Oral Traditions*, 147.

74 Quintilian, *Inst.* 10.1.19.

75 Rubin, *Memory in Oral Traditions*, 155–61. See further in Chapter One on “The Ancient Mind and Modern Cognitive Science” above and on “Inference Generation in Cognitive Perspective” below.

76 Since Mark’s Gospel was experienced primarily in the oral/aural context of performance, it was easily absorbed into the collective memory of the early Christians. So also Hartvigsen, *Prepare*, 85–87.

77 See further below on “Allusion.”

mutated effect of prior familiarity with the Gospel's narrative at points where cultural scripts may have intersected with the story. This approach enables us to observe the narrative development of the portrait of Mark's Jesus over the course of a single performance: traditions associated with David and Yahweh are initially linked to the Markan Jesus through rhetorically subtle means in the prologue. These relationships are cleverly extrapolated as the narrative unfolds toward the passion. Some audience members may see the proverbial writing on the wall ahead of time, but the narrative itself builds progressively, and it is this progression that will be elucidated over the course of this study.

In sum, this study approaches the Gospel of Mark as a text that was meant for public reading from a manuscript because it was primarily experienced aurally through hearing, rather than visually through (silent) reading. While lectors were highly educated—a privilege that allowed for skilled and nuanced oral delivery—most audience members meeting in a house church setting were not so fortunate. Like 85–95% of the people in the first-century Mediterranean world, the vast majority of audience members were relatively illiterate, though this does not mean they were not intelligent and could not appreciate a sophisticated story. Since audiences were and are heterogeneous, this study eschews use of a monolithic “implied audience” and instead represents a multiplicity of viable readings within a single audience.

Audience experiences of Mark's Gospel were subject to the distinctive factors of *hearing* rather than *reading*, brought on by the *aural* rather than *visual* medium. The lack of pause, rewind, and fast-forward buttons would have placed a great burden on audience and lector alike, the latter of which needed to control the flow of the event through skilled delivery in order to aid in audience comprehension. For our purposes, this applies especially to the rhetorical texture of the narrative. To limit the task somewhat, this study focuses on the most relevant aspects of ancient rhetorical theory, which surround audience participation in the production of hidden meaning. Primary among these figures are intentional omission, *emphasis*, irony, and allusion, which are grounded in the more explicit narrative cues, like the use of testimony.

### Inference Generation in Ancient Rhetorical Theory

As we have already seen, interest in the audience and its participation was a given amongst trained lectors.<sup>78</sup> After all, rhetoric is, by definition, aimed at

<sup>78</sup> See also, the recent discussion of the role of the audience in ancient rhetoric in Maxwell, *Hearing*, 27–40.



convincing or moving an audience. There were many ways to engender audience participation through rhetoric, including providing access to privileged information, omitting specific information, setting forth open-ended comparisons, like metaphors, riddles, fables, and parables, hiding valuable information in subtle constructions (e.g., *emphasis* and irony), questions (and answers), and allusions.<sup>79</sup> While we will encounter the use of all of these figures in Chapters Three to Six below, we focus particularly on intentional omission, *emphasis*, irony, and allusion, because these figures are the ones that receive the most use in Mark's rhetorical presentation of Jesus as the *kyriotic* Son. We will then conclude the chapter with a discussion of testimony because of the important role it plays in the characterization of Mark's Jesus vis-à-vis the rhetoric of inference.

Quintilian believed that readers should pore over manuscripts in order to best bring out their figured dimensions for audience members. This was especially true of some lines, words, or phrases that appear early on in the story, which may initially seem insignificant "because we do not as yet know why they are said;" for this reason, it was necessary to "go back over them when we know the whole text."<sup>80</sup> In what follows, only the most relevant such figures will be discussed—figures which we may expect the lector to bring out in performances of Mark's tale of the *kyriotic* Son. We begin with intentional omission.

### *Intentional Omission*

The omission of certain information lies at the heart of figures eliciting audience participation through inference. In many ways, this practice is common sense: what is left unsaid must be inferred if it is to be comprehended.<sup>81</sup> Omissions such as these prompted inference generation, which Theophrastus (3rd century BCE) believed had dramatic rhetorical implications because it won audience members over to an argument, enlisting them as "witnesses,"

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79 For ancient perception of audience participation, in addition to the discussion below, see Maxwell, *Hearing*, 41–76. For modern approaches from a theatrical perspective, see Susan Kattwinkel, ed., *Audience Participation: Essays on Inclusion in Performance* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 2003).

80 Adhuc nobis quare dicta sint ignorantibus, ideoque erunt cognitibus omnibus repetenda (*Inst* 10.1.21). This particular discussion in Quintilian's *Institutes* comes in the context of reading oratory. However, all writing was ultimately composed for being read aloud, and, as such, Quintilian's comments are apropos to the performance of narrative, as well.

81 So also Maxwell, *Hearing*, 51.



offering “testimonies” to the omitted information.<sup>82</sup> Demetrius summarizes Theophrastus’s advice thusly:

These then are the essentials of persuasiveness, along with Theophrastus’s advice that you should not elaborate on everything punctiliously but should omit some points for the listener to infer and workout for himself. For when he infers what you have omitted, he is not just listening to you but he becomes your witness and reacts more favorably to you. For he is made aware of his own intelligence through you, who have given him the opportunity to be intelligent. To tell your listener every detail as though he were a fool seems to judge him as such.<sup>83</sup>

Audience members are most engaged, and ultimately persuaded, by arguments that require effort on their part.<sup>84</sup> Information could be omitted by failure to explain an indicative aspect of the narrative. For example, the author of *Rhetoric Ad Herennium* suggests, “If I should say that I have returned from the province, it would also be understood that I had gone to the province.”<sup>85</sup>

In other instances, the omission may come in the use of a symbol. As Demetrius points out, symbols are so forceful “because they resemble brevity in speech. We are left to infer a great deal from a short statement.”<sup>86</sup> While Mark will use symbols such as “sight” and “bread,”<sup>87</sup> Demetrius offers the following vivid example: the straightforward statement “your trees will be cut down” is much more forceful when expressed symbolically as, “the cicadas will sing to you from the ground.”<sup>88</sup> The audience must grapple with the symbol,

82 Theophr. Frag. 696. See William W. Fortenbaugh et al., eds., *Theophrastus of Eresus, Sources for His Life, Writings, Thought and Influence, Text and Translation*, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1992).

83 *Eloc.* 222, 'Εν τούτοις τε οὖν τὸ πιθανόν, καὶ ἐν ᾧ Θεόφραστος φησιν, ὅτι οὐ πάντα ἐπ' ἀκριβείας δεῖ μακρηγορεῖν, ἀλλ' ἔνια καταλιπεῖν καὶ τῷ ἀκροατῇ συνιέναι, καὶ λογίζεσθαι ἐξ αὐτοῦ: συνεῖς γὰρ τὸ ἔλλειφθὲν ὑπὸ σοῦ οὐκ ἀκροατῆς μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ μάρτυς σου γίνεταί, καὶ ἅμα εὐμενέστερος. συνετὸς γὰρ ἑαυτῷ δοκεῖ διὰ σέ τὸν ἀφορμὴν παρεσχηκότα αὐτῷ τοῦ συνιέναι, τὸ δὲ πάντα ὡς ἀνοήτῳ λέγειν καταγινώσκοντι ἔοικεν τοῦ ἀκροατοῦ.

84 Similarly, Maxwell, *Hearing*, 52.

85 *Rhet. Her.* 1.9.14, Quod genus, si dicam me ex provinica redisse, profectum quoque in provinciam intellegatur.

86 Demetrius, *Eloc.* 243, καὶ γὰρ ἐκ τοῦ βραχέως ῥηθέντος ὑπονοῆσαι τὰ πλεῖστα δεῖ, καθάπερ ἐκ τῶν συμβόλων.

87 On “sight” as a symbol in Mark, see below on 10:46–52. On “bread,” see below on 6:34–44.

88 Demetrius, *Eloc.* 243, οὕτως καὶ τὸ “χαμόθεν οἱ τέττιγες ὑμῖν ᾄδονται” δεινότερον ἀλληγορικῶς ῥηθέν, ἢ εἴπερ ἀπλῶς ἐρρήθῃ, “τὰ δένδρα ὑμῶν ἐκκοπήσεται.”

even if only briefly, in order to understand the meaning—and the rhetorical power is all the more persuasive when they have done so.

Similarly, rhetorical questions (ἐπερώτησις/interrogatio), when left unanswered, can be more forceful than purely indicative statements, since the audience must grope for an answer left omitted from the performance (*Eloc.* 279). In this way, questions may be used to recapitulate (Aristotle, *Rhet.* 3.19.5 [ἐπερώτησις]) or even amplify points in an argument for audience members (*Rhet. Her.* 4.15.22). As we shall see, questions, which the narrative leaves open-ended, play an important role in encouraging audience inference concerning the identity of Mark's Jesus.<sup>89</sup>

These omissions form what modern literary critics have referred to as “gaps;” that is, places in a text where information is not explicitly stated and must be supplied by the reader. These “gaps,” which engender inference generation, are part of the warp and woof of narratives themselves. Indeed, they are so ubiquitous that Meier Sternberg has written of literary works as a “system of gaps.”<sup>90</sup> The result is that “the world of situations and dramas constructed by the reader—causal sequence and all—is far from identical with what he encounters in the form of overt statement.”<sup>91</sup> Sternberg's observations are inline with those first registered by Theophrastus, relayed through Demetrius (quoted above).<sup>92</sup>

Narrowing our focus, four specific and related techniques from ancient rhetorical theory merit extended discussion as they relate to stimulating inference generation: *emphasis*, irony, appropriation and reversal, and allusion.

89 Cf. Mark 1:24; 1:27; 2:7; 4:41; 6:2; 8:27; 8:29; 9:12; 12:35; 12:37; 15:34. On the use of questions in the characterization of Mark's Jesus, see Ohajuobodo I. Oko, “Who Then Is This?: A Narrative Study of the Role of the Question of the Identity of Jesus in the Plot of Mark's Gospel,” *BBB* 148 (Berlin: Philo, 2004).

90 Arguably the most important modern work on “gaps” has come from Wolfgang Iser. See especially, his “Indeterminacy and the Reader's Response in Prose Fiction,” in *Aspects of Narrative: Selected Papers from the English Institute*, ed. J. Hillis Miller (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), 1–45. See also, Wolfgang Iser, “The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach,” *New Literary History* 3 (1972): 279–99; idem, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980). Cf. Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 186–90.

91 Sternberg, *Poetics*, 186.

92 For a thorough demonstration of ancient rhetorical theory as the predecessor of modern gap theory, see Maxwell, *Hearing*.

### *Emphasis*

The ancient figure of “*emphasis*” draws attention to a latent meaning, hidden within a seemingly innocuous phrase. When it comes to prompting audience participation through inference, the latent meaning is more important than that which is plainly stated.<sup>93</sup> Along with his discussion of intentional omission, Demetrius also provides an instructive discussion of a figure, which he calls “allusive verbal innuendo” (τὸ ἐσχηματισμένον ἐν λόγῳ) in his *On Style* (287–298), which is likewise referred to as *emphasis* or *significatio*, depending on the author.

By highlighting allusive language, a lector could insinuate elements not made explicit, leaving breadcrumbs, as it were, for audience members to follow from their own ingenuity. Demetrius notes that this figure is used by some with “vulgar and what one might call obtrusive explicitness,” as opposed to more skilled composers who used the *emphasis* with “tact and circumspection” (287).<sup>94</sup> He illustrates a skilled use of the figure with an example from Plato’s *Phaedo* (59c) in which Plato blames Aristippus and Cleombrotus, who were feasting in Aegina while Socrates was imprisoned for many days in Athens without a visit from his friends, despite their close proximity (only two hundred stades). When *Phaedo* asks Plato whether Aristippus and Cleombrotus came to visit, his reply is allusive; “No, they were in Aegina.” Those in the audience already know where they were and, in Demetrius’s estimation, “the passage seems far more forceful because the force is produced by [the audience’s inference of] the fact itself and not by an authorial comment.”<sup>95</sup>

Rhetorical force is increased when the audience is given the opportunity to infer matters on their own, rather than being told something plainly and explicitly. This effect also may be accomplished through the “use of words with an equivocal meaning;” indeed, this technique was commonly practiced.<sup>96</sup> This is especially the case when the context can support two opposing meanings. For example, Demetrius notes, Aeschines’s entire passage about Telauges “will leave you puzzled whether it is intended to prompt admiration or

93 Frederick Ahl, “The Art of Safe Criticism in Greece and Rome,” *AJP* 105 (1984): 178–79.

94 *Eloc.* 287, οἱ νῦν ῥήτορες γελοιῶς ποιοῦσιν καὶ μετὰ ἐμφάσεως ἀγεννοῦς ἅμα καὶ οἷον ἀναμνηστικῆς, ἀληθινὸν δὲ σχήμα ἐστὶ λόγου μετὰ δυοῖν τούτοις λεγόμενον, εὐπρεπείας καὶ ἀσφαλείας.

95 *Eloc.* 288, καὶ πολὺ δεινότερος ὁ λόγος δοκεῖ τοῦ πράγματος αὐτοῦ ἐμφαίνοντος τὸ δεινόν, οὐχὶ τοῦ λέγοντος. The line is similarly interpreted as an attack on Aristippus in Diog. Laert. 3.36.

96 *Eloc.* 291, πολλαχῇ μέντοι καὶ ἐπαμφοτερίζουσιν.

mockery. This ambiguous way of speaking, while not irony, nevertheless has a suggestion of irony (εἰρωνείας ἔμφασιν).<sup>97</sup>

While Demetrius's comments are specifically about the forceful style, as with the comments of Quintilian and *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (see below), they are representative across stylistic levels and genres. The presence of this sort of ironic *emphasis* in the Greek novels is illustrative on this score. For example, in Chariton's *Chaereas and Callirhoe*, King Artaxerxes hatches a plan while hunting to have Callirhoe for himself and, as a result, calls off the hunt before a kill is made. Yet Chariton tells the audience, "the king now clinging to hope, rode back to the palace as if he had caught the finest/most beautiful quarry (τὸ κάλλιστον θήραμα)" (*Chaer.* 6.4.9).<sup>98</sup> On the surface the king has not caught anything, but at a deeper level the audience is led to infer that he had trapped Callirhoe. Other than the context, a lexical hint is found in the superlative κάλλιστον, which can refer to the fine quality of an object, but also to its physical beauty.<sup>99</sup>

Quintilian describes *emphasis* as occurring "when a hidden meaning is extracted from a phrase."<sup>100</sup> Not only can one use *emphasis* with phrases (as a figure), but it also works on the level of individual words (as a trope).<sup>101</sup> To be sure, Quintilian does instruct against the use of ambiguous words (homonyms), since "single words give rise to error when the same name applies to a number of things or persons."<sup>102</sup> However, *emphasis* should be distinguished from this problematic use of homonyms in that the polyvalency in *emphasis* enhances the rhetoric whereas certain homonyms simply obscure clarity.

For Quintilian, there are two kinds of *emphasis*: one means more than it says, the other means something that it does not say (*Inst.* 8.3.83). Since this second form of *emphasis* (also called, *aposiopesis*<sup>103</sup>) is not germane to the

97 *Eloc.* 291, πᾶσα γὰρ σχεδὸν ἢ περὶ τὸν Τηλαυγὴ διήγησις ἀπορίαν παρέχει, εἴτε θαυμασμὸς εἴτε χλευασμὸς ἐστὶ. τὸ δὲ τοιοῦτον εἶδος ἀμφίβολον, καίτοι εἰρωνεία οὐκ ὄν ἔχει τινὰ ὅμως καὶ εἰρωνείας ἔμφασιν.

98 βασιλεὺς δὲ ἀνηρτημένος ταῖς ἐλπίσιν εἰσήλυνεν εἰς τὰ βασιλεία χαίρων ὡς τὸ κάλλιστον θήραμα θηράσας. Using the rubric of *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, this text would be "*emphasis* through analogy" (4.54.67). On *emphasis* in *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, see below.

99 Indeed, this term is used to refer to Callirhoe throughout Chariton's novel.

100 Quintilian, *Inst.* 9.2.64, est *emphasis* etiam inter figuras, cum ex aliquo dicto latens aliquid eruitur.

101 Because the mechanics of *emphasis* are consistent whether used as a figure or a trope, I treat them together below.

102 Quintilian, *Inst.* 7.9.2, singula adferunt errorem, cum pluribus rebus aut hominibus eadem appellatio est (ὁμωνυμία dicitur).

103 In *aposiopesis*, speech is broken off abruptly in order to imply more than is actually said.

study at hand, I focus instead on the first. In his discussion of *emphasis* as meaning more than one explicitly says, Quintilian draws on Vergil's *Aeneid* for illustration.<sup>104</sup> In line 262 of Book 2, Vergil describes Ulysses's descent from the horse: "The opened horse restores them to the air, and there joyfully from the hollow wood come forth Thessandrus and Sthenelus the captains, and dread Ulysses, sliding down the rope they had let down."<sup>105</sup> We are not told the horse's size explicitly, but the line "sliding down the rope" implies that the horse is quite large. If grown men must slide down a rope to reach the ground, the horse must be incredibly big! Further, in the context of the epic itself, this figure also contributes to the overall *ethos* of this scene, which portrays the ominous presence of the Greeks as they prepare to sack Troy. Similarly, in line 361 of Book 3, Vergil describes the Cyclops as lying "throughout the cave" (*per antrum*). Though we are given no measurement of the Cyclops, it is implied that the monster is enormous since he evidently fills the whole cave!

In his discussion of *emphasis* as a figure, Quintilian focuses particularly on the use of ambiguity inherent in some words in order to encourage the audience to draw out a hidden meaning. At a fundamental level, *emphasis* is a natural product of the ambiguity created by multivalency in some terms. For example, the Latin term *altus* can mean either "high" or "deep"—depending on the context. Similarly, the term *sacer* can mean either "sacred" or "accursed"—depending on the context. The same holds true of Greek, as can be seen in the exchange between the Johannine Jesus and Nicodemus concerning birth ἄνωθεν: it can either mean "from above" or "again" depending on the context (John 3:1–15).

As we will see throughout Chapters Three to Five below, the Gospel of Mark uses this figure to great advantage with the term κύριος. On the one hand, it can mean "master" or "sir." But it may also carry the meaning, "Lord," as in the name used for Yahweh in the LXX. When the context can allow for both meanings, the term becomes pregnant with *emphasis*. To be sure, Quintilian deemed *emphasis* built upon a single word to be the most trivial form of the figure.<sup>106</sup> However, given the enthusiasm of the Ciceronian rhetorical tradition for basing *emphasis* upon a single word (see below), this opinion seems more

104 Quintilian, *Inst.* 8.3.84–85.

105 Illos patefactus ad auras reddit equus, laetique cavo se robore promunt Thessandrus Sthenelusque duces, et dirus Ulixes, demissum lapsi per funem.

106 *Inst.* 9.2.99. Even so, Quintilian uses single word examples to illustrate the ubiquity of *emphasis* in everyday expressions, like "He is a human being" (*homo est ille*) and "We must live" (*vivendum est*). In this way, the natural way of everyday language reflects the art of rhetoric (*Inst.* 8.3.86).

based on the preference of the rhetor than upon any hard and fast rhetorical principle.

As we have seen, Quintilian urged caution when exploiting words with a double meaning, such as in *Aen.* 4.550–551 and Mark's Gospel.<sup>107</sup> Indeed, he warned that they “rarely fit the situation neatly, unless they [the words with double meanings] are decisively aided by the actual facts.”<sup>108</sup> As we shall see in Chapters Three to Six, Mark's Gospel heeds this advice through the use of explicit *testimonia* offered by the storyteller, God, the Markan Jesus, and a host of other characters in the narrative, all of which scaffold this less-direct figural language.

In a later discussion, Quintilian offers a glimpse into the mechanics of *emphasis*, which fits the sentiments of Demetrius (and Theophrastus) articulated above. Well-placed *emphasis* is set in the larger context of more direct evidence in order that the hearers make a deduction to which they may have been predisposed against if they had been told directly. Quintilian puts it this way:

Let the facts themselves guide the judge to form suspicion; let us put everything else out of the way that only the one point remains. Emotional appeals are also a great help here, as are hesitations and words interspersed with silences. This will ensure that the judge himself searches for something, which perhaps he would not believe if he heard it, and then what he thinks he has found for himself he believes.<sup>109</sup>

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107 Quintilian leverages *Aen.* 4.550–551 as an example of *emphasis* that exploits double meaning. Dido complains of marriage to Anna, exclaiming, “Ah, that I could not spend my life apart from wedlock, a blameless life, like some wild creature, and not know such cares” (non licuit thalami expertem sine crimine vitam degere more ferae)! On the surface, it may seem as though Dido laments marriage; however, things are not what they first seem. On the one hand, the life of a wild beast is attractive. Freedom from marriage is desirable because wild beasts do not go through the heartbreak currently tormenting Dido. However, the life of a wild beast is also deplorable because it suggests a life fit for wild creatures, devoid of the dignity due humans. The ambiguity surrounding the life of some wild creature leaves a gap in the discourse, opening the imagery to *emphasis*. Audience members are encouraged to infer that Vergil has buried “something hidden and left for the hearer to discover” (Quintilian, *Inst.* 9.2.65).

108 Quintilian, *Inst.* 6.3.48, Non quia excludenda sint omnino verba duos sensus significantia, sed quia raro belle respondeant, nisi cum prorsus rebus ipsis adiuvantur.

109 *Inst.* 9.2.71, res ipsae perducant iudicem ad suspicionem, et amoliamur cetera, ut hoc solum supersit; in quo multum etiam adfectus iuvant et interrupta silentio dictio et

He continues, again in a juridical context:

Some ideas that you could not actually demonstrate should be sprinkled in the mind by a figure [contextually, *emphasis*]. The hidden dart sometimes sticks; it cannot be removed since it cannot be seen; but if you were to say the same thing openly, it could be defended and a case would need to be made. (*Inst.* 9.2.75)<sup>110</sup>

Again,

The figure [*emphasis*] also offers the advantage that the hearer enjoys understanding it, and then he promotes his own cleverness and praises himself by means of another's speech. (*Inst.* 9.2.78)<sup>111</sup>

These remarks are found in Quintilian's prescription for *emphasis* in situations where it is deemed either unsafe or unseemly to speak openly, such as in a juridical setting.<sup>112</sup> However, the surrounding context (in which the *Aeneid* is evoked) makes clear that the mechanics are universal, as is the appeal to *emphasis* on the basis of increasing audience participation through inference.<sup>113</sup> Just as the figure is foundational to ambiguity in language, it may be—and indeed is—used across genres.

In the words of the author of *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, *emphasis* (*significatio*) “leaves more in suspicion than has been actually asserted” (4.53.67).<sup>114</sup> That is, one can mean more than is explicitly stated. One can prompt audience inference in this manner through the use of hyperbole, ambiguity, logical consequence, aposiopesis, and analogy. *Emphasis* is produced by ambiguity “when

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cunctationes. sic enim fiet, ut iudex quaerat illud nescio quid ipse, quod fortasse non crederet, si audiret, et ei, quod a se inventum existimat, credat.

110 quae probare non possis, figura potius spargenda sunt. haeret enim nonnunquam telum illud occultum, et hoc ipso, quod non apparet, eximi non potest; at si idem dicas palam, et defenditur et probandum est.

111 adiuvat etiam, quod auditor gaudet intelligere, et favet ingenio suo et alio dicente se laudat.

112 We will return to the topic of the specific motivations for *emphasis*, and the rest of the rhetoric of inference, in Chapter Seven below. For Quintilian, the figure could and should be used when the subject matter and/or context deems plain language unsafe, unseemly, or generally unwise at a rhetorical level (see *Inst.* 9.2.67–99).

113 Quintilian, *Inst.* 9.2.96–97.

114 Significatio est res quae plus in suspitione relinquit quam positum est in oratione.



a word can be taken in two or more senses, but nevertheless is taken in that sense which the speaker intends" (4.53.67).<sup>115</sup>

As with Quintilian (see above), arbitrary ambiguity that obscured proper style was to be avoided. Indeed, eschewing this sort of ambiguity was instilled in students at the foundation of their education. For example, Theon writes that amphibolies should be avoided because they obscure style.<sup>116</sup> However, *emphasis*, as conceived by the author of *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, actually enhanced the style by contributing ornament in a way that increased its persuasive power. In fact, the avoidance of ambiguity that obscures was to be adopted in concert with cleaving to the kind that prompted *emphasis*: "Even as we must avoid those ambiguities which render the style obscure, so must we seek those which produce an *emphasis* of this sort" (*Rhet. Her.* 4.53.67).<sup>117</sup> Finally, words leveraging this sort of *emphasis* were easy for the hearer to find, "if we know and attend to the double and multiple meanings of words" (4.54.67).<sup>118</sup>

### *Irony*

Irony (εἰρωνεία) is similar to *emphasis* (ἐμφασις) and for that reason only brief comments will be made here in anticipation of its use in Mark's passion.<sup>119</sup> Cicero spoke of irony as when the speaker says the opposite of what he or she meant to convey (*De or.* 3.53.203). Quintilian's understanding is similar: irony is that "which asks to be understood in a sense other than what is asserted plainly" (*Inst.* 6.2.16).<sup>120</sup> Single words or entire passages may be ironic, and even entire lives—like that of Socrates—were sometimes believed to be ironic.<sup>121</sup> Further, Quintilian agreed with Cicero that the audience was to understand the opposite of what is said when making sense of irony (cf. 9.2.44).<sup>122</sup> In this figure, also called *illusio*, "the meaning is at odds with the one suggested by the words," and it is revealed to the audience "either by delivery, by the character of the speaker, or by the nature of the subject. If any of these is incompatible with the words, it is clear that the speech intends something totally different"

115 Per ambiguum, cum verbum potest in duas pluresve sententias accipi, sed accipitur tamen in eam partem quam vult is qui dixit.

116 Theon, *Prog.* 82–83.

117 Ambigua quemadmodum vitanda sunt quae obscuram reddunt orationem, item haec consequenda quae conficiunt huiusmodi significantionem.

118 Ea reperientur facile si noverimus et animum adverterimus verborum ancipites aut multiplices potestates.

119 See Chapter Six below.

120 εἰρωνεία quae diversum ei quod dicit intellectum petit.

121 *Inst.* 9.2.46; cf. Plato, *Rep.* 1.337A; *Symp.* 216E.

122 enim contrarium ei quod dicitur intelligendum est.



(8.6.54).<sup>123</sup> Moreover, what is paramount is *what* is actually said—that is, the content of the utterance—“because the thing said may be literally true in another context” (8.6.55);<sup>124</sup> the same would also hold true of actions.

It is difficult to read this description of irony without thinking of the “royal” treatment received by the Markan Jesus in his passion (see Chapter Six). In the context of the passion it is mockery, but with different actors in a different place, it would be appropriate treatment for a king. In other words, in the Markan world, their actions would be right and true with different intentions and a different context to match. In fact, given the trajectory of the Markan narrative on the topic of the kingship of Jesus, discussed at length in Chapter Six, the passion evinces a double irony, in which the derision is actually fitting for Mark’s conception of kingship, which leads us to another technique, “appropriation and reversal.”

### *Appropriation and Reversal*

With the appropriate finesse, one could co-opt—sometimes ironically—an opponent’s argument in support of his or her own.<sup>125</sup> Quintilian writes, “sometimes, it is possible to take hold of some remark or action of the judge or our opponent or our opponent’s advocate in order to strengthen our own point.”<sup>126</sup> Later, he writes that an orator can sometimes “make the opponent’s argument appear contradictory, irrelevant, unbelievable, superfluous, or favorable to our own client.”<sup>127</sup> Unfortunately, Quintilian does not elaborate further on the device.

Nevertheless, we can deduce from Cicero’s actual use of the technique that the logic worked this way: If an opponent argues “X, therefore Y,” it was possible to grant X, but subvert and reject Y. So, “X, therefore not Y.” For example, in his defense of Roscius, charged with the murder of his father, Cicero granted the

123 In eo vero genere quo contraria ostenduntur, ironia est (ilusionem vocant); quae aut pronuntiatione intelligitur aut persona aut rei natura; nam, si qua earum verbis dissentit, apparet diversam esse orationi voluntatem.

124 quanquam id plurimis id tropis accidit, ut intersit, quid de quoque dicatur, quia quod dicitur alibi verum est.

125 For further discussion of this device, see Andrew M. Riggsby, “Appropriation and Reversal as a Basis for Oratorical Proof,” *CP* 90 (1995): 245–56.

126 *Inst.* 5.11.43, Nonnumquam contingit iudicis quoque aut adversarii aut eius qui ex diverso agit dictum aliquod aut factum adsumere ad eorum quae intendimus fidem. The tactic is used by Cicero in *De or.* 1.55 (cf. 1.43), but it receives no comment there or elsewhere.

127 *Inst.* 5.13.17, Sed tamen interim oratoris est efficere, ut quid aut contrarium esse aut a causa diversum aut incredibile aut supervacuum aut nostrae potius causae videatur esse coniunctum.

prosecution's argument that Roscius had been relegated to the family's country estate.<sup>128</sup> However, rather than heaping disfavor and shame on Roscius—as the prosecution had argued—Cicero maintained fervently that receiving authority over the family's rural properties was, both generally in Roman tradition and in the case of this particular family, an honor that, in effect, would absolve Roscius of any motive for murder.<sup>129</sup>

The phenomenon is also found outside of judicial speeches. For example, before the evidence of his conspiracy came to light, Catiline offered to place himself in the custody of Lepidus, one of the two Metelli, or even Cicero himself (*Cat.* 1.19). Cicero, in response, appropriated Catiline's gesture, but reversed it so that it supported his own point: "But how far ought we to think that a man ought to be from bonds and imprisonment, who has already judged himself worthy of being given into custody?" (1.19)<sup>130</sup> In other words, if Catiline thinks he should be in custody, who are we to disagree with him?!

This device is also found in narrative form, as in the Greek novels, where it is adapted to work at the level of logic in animated form. As we saw above, King Artaxerxes hatched a plan to gain Callirhoe while on the hunt. However, he had initially gone on the hunt to clear his head and rid his heart of her, not in order to fall more deeply in love with her (*Chaer.* 6.3.7–9). But Eros had other plans. He granted the king's strategy but used it against him as the means to solidify his affections for Callirhoe. As Chariton told his audience, "[Eros] turned [the king's] own strategy against him and used the very cure to set his heart ablaze" (*Chaer.* 6.4.5).<sup>131</sup>

This device, which Andrew M. Riggsby has termed "appropriation and reversal," has received remarkably little attention, both in the handbooks and in secondary literature.<sup>132</sup> While this tactic does not always rely upon inference generation, its embodied medium in Mark's passion is such that the audience is expected to infer the reversal based on the preceding narrative: Yes, the Markan Jesus should be mocked and derided,<sup>133</sup> but it is this very derision that confirms his kingship rather than undercutting it.<sup>134</sup>

128 Cf. *Rosc. Am.* 42.

129 Cf. *Rosc. Am.* 43–49. For further discussion, see Riggsby, "Appropriation and Reversal," 245–46.

130 Sed quam longe videtur carcere atque a vinculis abesse debere qui se ipse iam dignum custodia iudicavit?

131 εἰς τοῦναντίον τὴν τέχνην περιέτρεψεν αὐτῷ καὶ δι' αὐτῆς τῆς θεραπέας ἐξέκαυσε τὴν ψυχὴν.

132 Riggsby, "Appropriation and Reversal," 247. Riggsby also discusses the use of the device in *Cael.* 6–22; *Sull.* 48; *Mur.* 21; *Phil.* 2.9; and *Div. Caec.* 59–61.

133 Cf., e.g., Mark 8:31; 9:12; 10:33–34; 10:45.

134 See Chapter Six below.

### Allusion

Allusion shares a great deal with *emphasis* and intentional omission in that it uses verbal references—of varying degrees of explicitness—in order to prompt the audience to infer a variety of different connections not made explicit by the utterance itself.<sup>135</sup> Allusions may be approached from either the vantage point of the author (or lector) or the audience. While allusions may be intentional and audience members were, as a whole, expected to catch them, it was also possible to hear allusions when none was consciously intended.<sup>136</sup> Of course, allusions could be missed entirely by audience members, and this is surely the case with some of the more subtle allusions we encounter in Mark's Gospel below.

However, skilled composers wrote in such a way that, if allusions were missed, their absence would not obfuscate comprehension of the narrative or confound audience members.<sup>137</sup> For example, in Cicero's *In Verro* (2.5.94), the

135 For further discussion on allusion in the context of audience inference, see Maxwell, *Hearing*, 74–76.

136 A modern and instructive example of an unintentional allusion comes from Disney's animated film, *Frozen* (2013), in which Prince Hans sings a duet with the protagonist, Anna. In the song, "Love is an Open Door," Hans and Anna reflect upon what they appreciate about their newfound infatuation, the audience hears the following:

Hans: We finish each other's—

Anna: Sandwiches! [contextually, *sentences* is expected].

Hans: That's what I was gonna say!

For actual fans of the now-defunct Fox cult-hit sitcom, *Arrested Development*, this line primed or activated an exchange between Michael Bluth and his (half) sister Lindsay Bluth Fünke. In Season 3 Episode 11, entitled, "Family Ties" (2006), the siblings are discussing a woman named Nellie, whom Michael erroneously believes to be his (long-lost) sister:

Michael: [about Nellie] It's like we finish each other's. . . .

Lindsay Bluth Fünke: Sandwiches? [again, contextually, *sentences* is expected].

Michael: Sentences. Why would I say. . . .

Lindsay Bluth Fünke: Sandwiches?

In an interview with Hillary Busis in *Entertainment Weekly*, the song's composers, Bobby and Kristen Anderson-Lopez, explained that the allusion was in fact an "unconscious callback" to that exchange between Lindsay and Michael, based upon their own appreciation for the show. The article, entitled, "Disney's 'Frozen': Composers talk unexpected influences (Gaga!) and accidentally aping 'Arrested Development,'" may be found at <http://tinyurl.com/krgk4d8> (accessed July 10, 2016). As a postscript, Michael's fake sister, Nellie, is, in fact, played by Justine Bateman, which adds a second level of irony because she is the real sister of Jason Bateman, who plays Michael Bluth. Like Mark's passion, *Arrested Development* drips with irony at multiple levels!

137 Maxwell, *Hearing*, 76. Cf. R. G. M. Nisbet, "The Orator and the Reader: Manipulation and Response in Cicero's Fifth Verrine," in *Author and Audience in Latin Literature*, ed.

orator provides a subtle allusion that could only enhance the rhetorical force: “As near as no matter the precedent of Utica was transferred, in the case of Hadrianus, to Syracuse, so as for two burial-places for two wicked governors to be instituted in two provinces.”<sup>138</sup> For those familiar with the tragic tradition, Lucius Accius’s line, “I see two sepulchers of two bodies” (video sepulchra duorum corporum),<sup>139</sup> may be activated.<sup>140</sup> Yet, those for whom Accius’s utterance is not activated or primed will by no means feel slighted because missing the allusion does not obscure the meaning of the line.<sup>141</sup>

The Greek novels are likewise full of allusions.<sup>142</sup> Chariton’s novel, *Chaereas and Callirhoe*, will provide two instructive examples for our purposes.<sup>143</sup> Sometimes, lines are quoted verbatim from another work, but are seamlessly integrated without an introductory statement of any kind. For example, at the opening of Book 4, twin verbatim allusions from Homer are elicited. In an attempt to convince his new wife, Callirhoe, to abandon thought of her former husband, Chaereas, Dionysius suggests that she build a tomb in his honor, even in the absence of a body. She is to imagine Chaereas at her side, saying, “bury me that at once I may enter the gates of Hades” (*Chaer.* 4.1.3). The line, θάπτε με, ὅττι τάχιστα πύλας Ἄϊδαο περήσω, is a verbatim quotation from *Iliad* 23.71 where Patroclus speaks it to Achilles.

While it is difficult to imagine first-century audience members unfamiliar with Homer, any audience members who did not have the death of Patroclus (cf. *Il* 23.71) activated in a performance of *Chaer.* 4 would have no problem understanding the line. But for those who hear the connection, a comparison is formed between Chaereas and Patroclus; the result, as Koen De Temmerman

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Anthony John Woodman and Jonathan Powell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 13.

138 neque quicquam propius est factum quam ut illud Uticense exemplum de Hadriano trasferretur Syracusas, ut duo sepulchra duorum praetorum improborum duabus in prouinciis consituerentur.

139 Accius 655.

140 Nisbet, “The Orator and the Reader,” 13.

141 Nisbet, “The Orator and the Reader,” 13.

142 For a thorough discussion of allusions to Homer in the Greek novels, see Massimo Fusillo, “Il testo nel testo: la citazione nel romanzo greco,” *MD* 25 (1990): 27–48.

143 Allusions pervade Chariton. For more on allusion therein, see Fusillo, “Il testo nel testo,” 35–41; Gesine Manuwald, “Zitate als Mittel des Erzählens: zur Darstellungstechnik Charitons in seinem Roman Kallirhoe,” *WJA* 24 (2000): 97–122; Martina Hirschberger, “Epos und Tragödie in Charitons Kallirhoe. Ein Beitrag zur Intertextualität des griechischen Romans,” *WJA* 25 (2001): 158–86.

has put it, is that “Chaereas is assimilated to Patroclus.”<sup>144</sup> This connection would be further strengthened only a few lines later when Dionysius suggests that Chaereas’s tomb be erected before the city walls “that from afar it may be visible to men on the waters” (*Chaer.* 4.1.5). Again, the line, ὥς κεν τηλεφανῆς ἐκ ποντόφιν ἀνδράσιν εἴη, is seamlessly integrated from Homer. This time, the text triggered is *Od.* 24.83, which once more encourages informed audience members to infer the assimilation of Chaereas to Patroclus, since the line was written by Homer to describe the rationale for the prominent placement of the tomb shared by Patroclus and Achilles. Once more, the narrative is not obscured if the allusion is not heard by certain audience members, but the characterization of Chaereas is all the richer for those drawn to hear a *synkristic* relationship between the two in which allusive language prompts comparison and assimilation (see further below).<sup>145</sup>

While allusions often come as seamlessly integrated verbatim quotations, they can also emulate another narrative through allusive (or *synkristic*) language that, in turn, activates (whether partially or fully) other scripts in the minds of those in the audience.<sup>146</sup> For example, such is the uproar created by Callirhoe’s arrival in Babylon that, when she disappears back into her carriage, those standing around, “no longer able to see Callirhoe, sought to kiss the travelling-car (κατεφίλουν τὸν δῖφρον) itself” (*Chaer.* 5.3.10).<sup>147</sup> For those in the audience familiar with Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia*, this scene may recall Panthea’s

144 Koen De Temmerman, *Crafting Characters: Heroes and Heroines in the Ancient Greek Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 57.

145 For more on the characterization of Chaereas and the role of allusion to prompt his assimilation to Patroclus, along with the topic of characterization in Chariton more broadly, see De Temmerman, *Crafting Characters*, 46–117. Much more could be written about allusion in Chariton. For a recent treatment of the allusions to tragedy in *Chaer.* 2.9.3 (to Euripides, *Medea*) and 3.8.8 (to Sophocles, *Ajax* 550–551), see Stephen M. Trzaskoma, “Chariton and Tragedy: Reconsiderations and New Evidence,” *AJP* 131 (2010): 219–31.

146 While I have in mind imitation of a much less-grand scale, the art of *mimesis*, whereby one text mimics and even tries to outdo a prior text, is closely related to that of “allusion.” E.g., Vergil’s *Aeneid* is a *mimesis* of Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. For further discussion of the wide range of issues, which fall outside of the immediate purview of this study, see the collection of essays in Dennis R. MacDonald, ed., *Mimesis and Intertextuality in Antiquity and Christianity*, SAC (Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2001). For the seminal work arguing for Mark’s Gospel as a *mimesis* of Homer, with whom I will interact in the chapters below, see Dennis R. MacDonald, *The Homeric Epics and the Gospel of Mark* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2000). MacDonald’s thesis that Mark’s Gospel is a *mimesis* of Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey* has been scrutinized recently and found wanting. See Kristian Larsson, “Intertextual Density, Quantifying Imitation,” *JBL* 133 (2014): 309–31.

147 μηκέτι ἔχοντες Καλλιρρόην ὁρᾶν, κατεφίλουν τὸν δῖφρον.

dramatic farewell to Abradates where she kisses the travelling-car (κατεφίλησε τὸν δῖφρον), having lost the ability to kiss her beloved Abradates, separated as they are by the walls of the carriage (Xenophon, *Cyr.* 6.4.10).

Allusions such as those discussed above enhance the richness of the text by adding depth to its meaning. So it is with Mark's Gospel. For example, the allusive portrait of the Markan Jesus walking across the sea (6:45–52) may activate a host of scripts from cultural memory for some in the audience, but the narrative itself is not obscured for those who do not detect the allusive nature of the episode. For those steeped in the the LXX, a host of scripts may be activated or primed that prompt audience comparison between Mark's Jesus and Yahweh, and the resultant assimilation of the former to the latter.<sup>148</sup> The same will be the case with the depictions of the Markan Jesus as an exorcist and therapeutic healer, which will activate scripts associated both with Yahweh and David's son, Solomon,<sup>149</sup> and the depiction of him as a king, which will primarily activate schemas and scripts associated with the kingship of David.<sup>150</sup>

Allusions thus have a comparative element in that they invite the reader to apply any number of schemas and scripts from outside the world of the text, whether a story, history, or speech, to certain characters or scenes within the text being performed before the audience. Audience members are thereby prompted to infer comparisons between the allusive script and the character(s) or scene in the story prompted by the allusive language. Comparison, a figure variously referred to as *synkrisis* or *similitudo*, is ubiquitous in ancient composition.<sup>151</sup> Rhetorica ad Herennium defines comparison (*similitudo*)

148 See further in Chapters Four and Six below.

149 E.g., see Chapter Four below on Mark 1:21–28; 2:1–12; 3:7–12; 5:1–19, and Chapter Five below on 10:46–52.

150 E.g., see Chapter Five below on Mark 11:1–11 and Chapter Six throughout the passion.

151 See Theon, *Prog.* 112–115; Ps-Hermogenes, *Prog.* 18–20; Aphthonius, *Prog.* 42–44; Nicolaus, *Prog.* 59–63. On *synkrisis* in the *progymnasmata* and the first-century Mediterranean world, see Michael W. Martin, *Judas and the Rhetoric of Comparison in the Fourth Gospel*, New Testament Monographs 25 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2010), 37–90, esp. the instructive table of the arrangement of the various headings across these *progymnasmata* on pp. 42–43. At the primary stage of education, students were taught to compare two figures, whether roughly equal or the apparent lesser to the apparent greater, using a set of formal headings, such as origins, upbringing/training, intellect/virtues, pursuits, deeds, death, and events after death. Theon summarizes these headings as external goods, bodily goods, and goods of the mind and virtuous actions. Ps-Hermogenes writes that *synkrisis* is “a comparison of similar or dissimilar things, or of lesser things to greater or greater things to lesser” (*Prog.* 18). Equals could be compared, but it was also advisable to compare the “lesser” with the “greater,” “where you bring in the lesser to show it is equal with

simply as “a manner of speech than carries over one element of likeness from one thing to a different thing” (4.45.59).<sup>152</sup> This association naturally fosters an inference toward equal status inasmuch as the two figures are worthy of comparison without literally equating the two figures.

It has already been suggested that the Markan narrative leverages allusive words and sentences in ways that lead audience members to infer a degree of connection and/or similarity between the character (Mark’s Jesus) in the narrative so described and the one alluded to (typically David or Yahweh). These relationships are “*synkristic* relationships” in that they draw audience members to note comparative elements in the allusive language of the narrative. This rhetorical phenomenon, which could also be described as allusion, allusive language, or *synkristic* language, encourages inferences on the part of the audience through indirect constructions and, in this way, shares certain rhetorical mechanics with *emphasis* and intentional omission (discussed above). These *synkristic* relationships initiate and encourage the assimilation of Mark’s Jesus to both David and God inasmuch as they incorporate the actions and words of Mark’s Jesus into each of these figures.

Other allusions direct audience members back to earlier moments in the story—or anticipate later stages (for those with prior exposure). In the former, the allusive language may activate (whether in part or whole), for example, the prologue in order to encourage the audience to fill in gaps at the story level, since they possess “insider knowledge” from the prologue (and other asides

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the greater” (*Prog.* 19–20). The example Ps-Hermogenes gives in this regard is comparing Odysseus to Heracles (*Prog.* 20). Aphthonius (*Prog.* 42) and Nicolaus (*Prog.* 59–60) make similar observations. One reason the “lesser” is raised to equal status with the “greater” seems to be the simple fact of association, since equals were typically compared. Indeed, Theon insists that comparisons of two figures between whom there is a great difference should be avoided (*Prog.* 112–113):

Let it be specified that *synkrisis* are not comparisons of things having a great difference between them (for someone wondering whether Achilles or Thersites was braver would be laughable). But let comparisons be of likes and where we are in doubt as to which should be preferred because of no evident superiority of one to the other.

δὲ διωρίσθω, ὅτι αἱ συγκρίσεις γίνονται οὐ τῶν μεγάλην πρὸς ἄλληλα διαφορὰν ἔχόντων (γελοῖος γὰρ ὁ ἀπορῶν πότερον ἀνδρείότερος Ἀχιλλεὺς ἢ Θερσίτης), ἀλλ’ ὑπερ τῶν ὁμοίων, καὶ περὶ ὧν ἀμφισβητοῦμεν πότερον δεῖ προθεσθαι, διὰ τὸ μηδεμίαν ὁρὰν τοῦ ἐτέρου πρὸς τὸ ἕτερον ὑπεροχήν.

While these comparisons in the *progymnasmata* were quite formal, moving beyond the basic format was expected as the exercises took on a life of their own in real world settings. To be sure, some maintain the formality of *synkrisis*—as does Plutarch in his *Lives*—but in other instances only the (sometimes implicit) comparison remains.

152 Similitudo est oratio taducens ad rem quampiam aliquid ex re dispari simile.



from the storyteller) that elevates their position in the story above the characters.<sup>153</sup> Allusions to later events within the story, such as the metaphorical allusion to the cross as a throne in Mark 10:35–40,<sup>154</sup> may be lost on audience members lacking prior exposure to the narrative, whereas those in the audience familiar with the narrative may have the outcome of the allusion triggered, resulting in greater appreciation for the narrative artistry, which, in turn, increased rhetorical force.<sup>155</sup>

However, as we discussed at length above, the temporal flow of performance mutes the efficacy and complexity possible for allusions, whether to scripts outside the text or to events within it. Moreover, as Quintilian points out, a hearer's ability to consider the details of a performance, including the impact of its allusions, are dampened by the performance setting itself, since it includes both the interpretations of others and "the noisy cries of the applauding audience" (*Inst.* 10.1.17).<sup>156</sup>

In short, while allusions certainly prime or activate certain scripts for many audience members, we must exercise caution when imagining that detailed metanarratives or subtexts would be recalled at length during the performance itself.<sup>157</sup> In Chapters Three to Six, I approach allusive language in Mark's Gospel with this in mind, focusing predominantly, though not exclusively, on major schemas and scripts activated from cultural memory, whether grounded in the LXX or the broader Greco-Roman world.

Having discussed the key means for encouraging inference generation from ancient rhetoric, we now turn briefly to the topic of *testimonia* and its particular role in prompting audience inference in Mark's Gospel.

### *Testimony and Its Role in Inference Generation in Mark's Gospel*

Aristotle's primary discussion of witnesses and testimony occurs in his treatment of inartificial proofs, which aid in forensic oratory (*Rhet.* 1.15.1–3). For Aristotle, there are two types of witnesses: ancient and recent (1.15.13). Ancient witnesses, including poets and those widely known to be of excellent repute, are considered to be the most reliable since they cannot be corrupted (1.15.13–17).

153 On the elevated position of the audience, see Sternberg, *Poetics*, 164–65. On this phenomenon in antiquity, see Maxwell, *Hearing*, 49–51.

154 See below in Chapters Four and Five.

155 Cf., e.g., Demetrius, *Eloc.* 222; Quintilian, *Inst.* 9.2.78.

156 ... audienti frequenter aut suos cuique favor aut ille laudantium clamor extorquet.

157 However, after the performance has finished, audience members may discuss and reflect upon possible detailed connections. See further above on "Hearing a Text in Performance."



In our period, a common ancient witness was Homer. For example, in Chariton's *Callirhoe*, Dionysius enlists a line from Homer as testimony against Leonas that Callirhoe is actually a goddess, not a mere mortal: "Have you not heard what Homer teaches us? 'Often as strangers from foreign lands the gods watch both the insolence and righteousness of people'" (*Chaer.* 2.3.7).<sup>158</sup>

Recent witnesses include those who are contemporaries of the orator, both those who share the risk of the trial and those who do not. The former are only trustworthy in testifying that the act happened (or that it did not), whereas the latter can give more substantive, qualitative testimony since they are unattached to the matter about which they testify. For example, those who are not connected with the case (that is, those who are not at risk of prosecution [οἱ . . . ἄπωθεν]) were considered very trustworthy in determining if an act was just or unjust (δίκαιον ἢ ἀδίκον), expedient or inexpedient (συνφέρον ἢ ἀσύμφορον) (1.15.16–17).

In the Greek novels, recent witnesses are sometimes called in order to support a decision outside juridical settings—an important feature when considering the relevance of this device to the Gospel of Mark. For example, Callirhoe calls Chaereas's encouragement to keep their baby (in a dream) a testimony in support of her decision to keep her child: "For [Chaereas] himself stood at my side in a dream and said, 'I entrust our son to you.' I call on you, Chaereas, to bear witness that it is you who make me the bride of Dionysius" (*Chaer.* 2.11.3; cf. 2.9.6).<sup>159</sup>

Cicero discusses two groups of *loci* (the "places" where arguments are found): those intrinsic to the argument itself, and those extrinsic to the argument brought in from outside (*Top.* 19.72). In his discussion of the latter, he focuses primarily upon the role of testimony and witnesses, particularly on what makes a testimony trustworthy (19.73–20.78). For Cicero, the strength of a testimony is found in the authority it carries, based upon either one's nature or circumstances:

158 οὐκ ἤκουσας οὐδὲ Ὀμήρου διδάσκοντος ἡμᾶς καὶ τε θεοὶ ξείνοισιν εἰοκότες ἄλλοδαποῖσιν ἀνθρώπων ὕβριν τε καὶ εὐνομίην ἐφορώσι. Dionysius cites *Od.* 17.485, 487. Incidentally and in light of our previous discussion on *hearing* as the dominant form of exposure to narrative in antiquity, it is not surprising that Dionysius asks Leonas whether he has *heard* Homer's teaching. Moreover, the citation from memory matches the expectation that lines would be committed to memory.

159 αὐτὸς γάρ μοι παραστάς ἐν τοῖς ὀνείροις 'παρατίθεμαί σοι φησὶ 'τὸν υἱόν.' Μαρτύρομαί σε, Χαιρέα, σὺ με Διονυσίῳ νυμφαγωγεῖς.'

Authority from one's nature depends to a large extent upon virtue; but in circumstances there are many things which confer authority: talent, wealth, age, fortune, skill, experience, necessity, and sometimes even a concurrence of fortuitous events (19.73).<sup>160</sup>

Cicero goes on to suggest that "those who are experienced" (*qui experti sunt*) tend to prompt trust in the audience (19.74), along with those who, by chance, are privy to valuable information (20.76). Cicero moves beyond Aristotle's discussion by sorting these witnesses (and their testimonies) into two categories: the gods, whose authority is based upon their nature, and people, whose authority comes from their hard work (20.76).<sup>161</sup>

Divine testimony comes in the form of (1) direct utterances, as from oracles, (2) divine works, such as the heavens, the flight and songs of birds, flashes of fire from heaven and portents on earth, along with foreshadowing revealed by the entrails of sacrificed animals, and (3) visions seen in sleep (20.77).<sup>162</sup> These topics (*loci*) are sometimes drawn upon in order to win conviction from an audience.<sup>163</sup> By contrast, the power of human testimony is built upon virtue (20.78). Typical human witnesses usually included people in public office, but also the writings and utterances of orators, philosophers, poets, and historians.<sup>164</sup> As mentioned above, others may be included by virtue of their fortuitous experience of significant events, such as happening upon a conversation or deed which was supposed to be kept secret (20.76).

In Quintilian's *Institutio*, the discussion of witnesses and testimony comes once more in the context of inartificial (nontechnical) proofs, along

160 Naturae auctoritas in virtute inest maxima; in tempore autem multa sunt quae adferant auctoritatem: ingenium opes aetas fortuna ars usus necessitas, concursio etiam non numquam rerum fortuitarum.

161 Cicero first introduces these as (1) those whose efficacy is based upon nature and (2) those whose efficacy is based upon hard work. The gods are considered trustworthy because of their divine nature, whereas people, if they are to have the power to convince must be considered trustworthy based on hard work (*Top.* 20.76–77).

162 For a thorough and detailed discussion of the use of divine testimony in ancient speeches, treatises, and Hellenistic narratives, see James R. McConnell Jr., *The Topos of Divine Testimony in Luke-Acts* (Eugene, Ore.: Wipf & Stock, 2014), 23–120; 177–226.

163 Quibus ex locis sumi interdum solent ad fidem faciendam testimonia deorum (Cic. *Top.* 20.77).

164 It is this subset of human testimony into which explicit citations from the LXX fall. However, the view that, at times, the Spirit spoke through, for example, David, complicates the precise categorization of the testimony. For example, see below in Chapter Four on Mark 12:35–37 and David's testimony as inspired speech.

with discussion of previous decisions, rumors, evidence from torture, documents, oaths, and witnesses (which play a major role in forensic speeches).<sup>165</sup> Witnesses may come either in writing or in person, though the former was believed to be easier to combat since the author was not present to be cross-examined (5.7.1). Those present bodily are either there voluntarily or because their presence is required by law (5.7.9). Once again witnesses are both divine and human. Divine testimony includes responses from gods, oracles, and omens (5.7.35–36). For example, divine testimony through supernatural darkness is often associated with the death of significant figures in Greco-Roman cultural memory, such as Alexander the Great,<sup>166</sup> Romulus,<sup>167</sup> Cleomenes,<sup>168</sup> Julius Caesar,<sup>169</sup> Carneades,<sup>170</sup> and Pelopidas.<sup>171</sup> Plutarch's version of the apotheosis of Romulus is likewise illustrative of divine testimony, this time marking the departure, rather than the death, of Rome's founding king.

Suddenly strange and inexplicable incidents and suspicious changes filled the air: the light of the sun failed and night came down upon them, not with gentleness and quiet, but with terrible thunder and furious blasts of wind driving rain from all quarters. Meanwhile the multitude dispersed and fled, but the nobles gathered closely together; and when the storm had abated, and the light shined, and the multitude, now assembled together again in the same place as before, searched anxiously for their king. The nobles would not suffer them to question his disappearance nor become inquisitive busybodies about it, but exhorted them all to honor and do homage to Romulus, since he had been caught up to the gods, and was thus to be a gracious god for them instead of a good king.<sup>172</sup>

165 Quintilian, *Inst.* 5.1.1–2; cf. 5.9.1–2.

166 Alexander Romance 3.33.5.

167 Plutarch *Vit. Romulus* 27.6.

168 Plutarch *Vit. Cleomenes* 39.

169 Vergil *Georgics* 1.463–468; Plutarch *Vit. Caesar* 69.4–5.

170 Diog. Laert. *Vit. Phil.* 4.64.

171 Plutarch *Vit. Pelopidas* 31.1–3. In the case of Pelopidas, however, an eclipse forms a divine testimony as an omen of his impending death.

172 Plutarch, *Vit. Romulus* 27.6–7: . . . ἄφνω δὲ θαυμαστά καὶ κρείττονα λόγου περὶ τὸν ἀέρα πάθῃ γενέσθαι καὶ μεταβολὰς ἀπίστους: τοῦ μὲν γὰρ ἡλίου τὸ φῶς ἐκλιπεῖν, νύκτα δὲ κατασχεῖν οὐ πράξειαν οὐδ' ἡσυχον, ἀλλὰ βροντάς τε δεινὰς καὶ πνοὰς ἀνέμων ζάλην ἐλαυνόντων πανταχόθεν ἔχουσιν: ἐν δὲ τούτῳ τὸν μὲν πολὺν ὄχλον σκεδασθέντα φυγεῖν, τοὺς δὲ δυνατοὺς συστραφῆναι μετ' ἀλλήλων: ἐπεὶ δ' ἔληξεν ἡ ταραχὴ καὶ τὸ φῶς ἐξέλαμψε, καὶ τῶν πολλῶν εἰς ταῦτο πάλιν συνερχομένων ζήτησις ἦν τοῦ βασιλέως καὶ πόθος, οὐκ ἔαν τοὺς δυνατοὺς ἐξετάζειν οὐδὲ πολυπραγμονεῖν, ἀλλὰ τιμὰν παρακελεύεσθαι πᾶσι καὶ σέβεσθαι Ῥωμύλον, ὡς ἀνθρωπασμένον

As we shall see in Chapter Six, this script will likely be activated for many in the audience at the supernatural darkness marking the death of the Markan Jesus in 15:33.

Cicero believed that topics were involved in every discussion (21.79). We should not then be surprised to see the topic (*locus/topos*) of *testimonia* embedded throughout the Gospel of Mark. Indeed, the entirety of Mark's Gospel is peppered with testimony concerning the identity of the Markan Jesus from witnesses human and divine, ancient and recent, mundane and inspired: the storyteller (1:1), "Isaiah" (1:2–3), John (1:7–8), God (1:9–11; 9:7), unclean spirits (1:24; 3:11; 5:7), David (2:21–28; 12:36), a blind seer (10:47–48), the Markan Jesus himself (14:62; 15:2; 15:34), a Roman centurion (15:39), and an angelic messenger (16:6–7). While these utterances do not always provide explicit testimony at the story level, they nevertheless serve as testimonies uttered by the narrator/lector to those in the audience. For example, Bartimaeus calls out to "Jesus, Son of David" for mercy, and, in this way, does not intend to offer a testimony within the story (10:47–48). Nevertheless, the storyteller's performance of this line before the audience in attendance forms a testimony to the Davidic sonship of Mark's Jesus in the *hic et nunc* of the performance event.<sup>173</sup> In narratological terms, it forms a testimony in the discourse, rather than the story.

While testimony is not explicitly joined with rhetorical figures intended to engender audience inference in the ancient rhetorical handbooks, it nevertheless serves complementary purposes in Mark's Gospel. The elements of *kyriototic* sonship couched in the rhetoric of inference are buttressed by explicit testimony to the identity of Mark's Jesus as the *kyriototic* Son,<sup>174</sup> which is distributed throughout the Gospel. As we shall see, the result is that the audience is given explicit clues to fill out the allusive language with the direct and explicit testimony. In other words, in Mark's Gospel these *testimonia* provide the "actual facts" (*rebus ipsis*)—the concrete and direct details—which Quintilian

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εἰς θεοῦ καὶ θεὸν εὐμενῇ γενησόμενον αὐτοῖς ἐκ χρηστοῦ βασιλέως. Cf. Cic. *Rep.* 2.10.17; 6.22.24; Liv 1.16–1–3. See also, Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.56.6, which associates darkness over all the earth with Romulus's death rather than his translation.

173 On the effect of time during the performance event, see Kelly R. Iverson, "The Present Tense of Performance: Immediacy and Transformative Power in Luke's Passion," in *From Text to Performance: Narrative and Performance Criticisms in Dialogue and Debate*, ed. Kelly R. Iverson (Eugene, Ore.: Cascade, 2014), 131–57.

174 See testimony from the narrator (1:1), "Isaiah" (1:2–3), John (1:7–8), God (1:9–11; 9:7; 15:33; 15:38), unclean spirits (1:24; 3:11; 5:7), David (2:21–28; 12:36), Bartimaeus (10:47–48), the Markan Jesus himself (14:62; 15:2; 15:34), a Roman centurion (15:39), and finally a "young man" at the empty tomb (16:6–7).

suggested should accompany *emphasis* in order to maximize its rhetorical force (*Inst.* 6.3.48).

### Inference Generation in Cognitive Perspective

To this point, we focused on inference generation in ancient rhetorical theory. However, modern cognitive research explains why the focus on leaving something hidden for the audience to discover works so well. The rhetoric of inference capitalizes on the inherently porous nature of narratives and the brain's automatic mechanisms for filling in the gaps.

There is general agreement among cognitive scientists that inference generation is essential to sense making, whether one is reading a text, listening to a story, watching a film, or having a conversation.<sup>175</sup> Narratives, whatever their medium, are fundamentally incomplete, made up of fragmented "discourse" (the actual words of the text) which must be construed and filled out by audience members who construct a "story" (a coherent narrative) based upon a combination or intersection of the raw discourse materials (e.g., words on the page or script) and previous experience (both from the "real world" and other narratives).<sup>176</sup> Thus, David Bordwell can refer to "film as a series of 'cues' that signal to the spectator that he/ she should 'execute a definable variety of operations.'" <sup>177</sup> Similarly, Richard Gerrig explains that, "readers [...] must construct [...] situation models, which integrate information from the text with broader real-world knowledge."<sup>178</sup> Or, as Edward Branigan puts it: "a perceiver uses a

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175 Manuel de Vega, "Toward an Embodied Approach to Inferences in Comprehension: The Case of Action Language," in *Inferences during Reading*, ed. Edward J. O'Brien, Anne E. Cook, and Robert F. Lorch Jr. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 189. By "inference," I refer to "any piece of information that is not explicitly stated in the text." Gail McKoon and Roger Ratcliff, "Inference during Reading," *Psychological Review* 99 (1992): 440.

176 On this common narratological distinction from a cognitive perspective, see Patrick C. Hogan, *Cognitive Science, Literature, and the Arts: A Guide for Humanists* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 115–18. This distinction between "discourse" and "story" holds true in both life and art. For example, jury members must construct a "story" from the fragmented and incomplete evidence ("discourse") they are given in the course of a trial. We experience narratives in the same way we make sense of the world around us. See further de Vega, "Embodied Inferences," 182–209.

177 David Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 29.

178 Gerrig, *Experiencing Narrative Worlds*, 6.

schema to automatically fill in any data that is deemed to be ‘missing’ in the text.”<sup>179</sup> In other words, “when comprehending a text, it is generally assumed that readers will use their general world knowledge to generate those inferences that ‘fill the gaps’ between what has been explicitly stated and what the ‘fully filled-in’ message was intended to convey.”<sup>180</sup>

Cognitive scientists generally agree that this process takes place for readers and hearers relatively effortlessly, automatically, and often unconsciously.<sup>181</sup> Patrick Hogan is representative when he notes that, “We fill in a great deal of real-world information *without ever becoming aware that anything is missing from the text* (e.g., that we do not see actually a bullet leave the gun and hit the man in the trench coat; needless to say, these data are also missing in parallel real life experiences).”<sup>182</sup> People tend to fill in necessary information automatically in order to maintain a satisfactory level of coherence, based upon the individual’s standards of coherence. When coherence cannot be maintained automatically, more strategic processes come into play in the moment-by-moment process of text comprehension.<sup>183</sup> To be sure, not all gaps will be filled online (i.e., during the reading or hearing process). However, if they remain vital to maintain the listener’s sense of narrative coherence, the remaining gaps will be addressed off-line (i.e., after the reading or hearing has been concluded). Otherwise, the gaps will be deemed unnecessary for sense making and thus discarded.

The automatic processes [involved in inference generation] often are adequate to provide a degree of coherence that meets the reader’s standards, but strategic processes may supplement them when the coherence achieved by automatic processes alone is inadequate. In this context, ‘strategic’ does not necessarily refer to very consciously selected and extensive strategies, but rather to (sometimes automated) actions that

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179 See further Edward Branigan, *Narrative Comprehension and Film* (London; New York: Routledge, 1992), 16.

180 Anne E. Cook, John E. Limber, and Edward J. O’Brien, “Situation-Based Context and the Availability of Predictive Inferences,” *Journal of Memory and Language* 44 (2001): 220.

181 For empirical evidence for the automated processes related to inference generation, see Friedemann Pulvermüller et al., “Functional Links between Motor and Language Systems,” *European Journal of Neuroscience* 21 (2005): 793–97.

182 Hogan, *Cognitive Science*, 117 (emphasis mine).

183 Paul van den Broek, Katinka Beker, and Marja Oudega, “Inference Generation in Text Comprehension: Automatic and Strategic Processes in the Construction of a Mental Representation,” in *Inferences during Reading*, ed. Edward J. O’Brien, Anne E. Cook, and Robert F. Lorch Jr. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 94–121.

fit the moment-to-moment situation. Thus, they often resemble more closely the strategic actions by an athlete who sees the ball appear and in a flash recognizes the opportunity to score than the conscious and thoughtful reflections, for example, about implications of winning or losing the game for the standings in the competition.<sup>184</sup>

To summarize, when a person experiences the discourse of a text, at least some information must be supplied on the part of the reader, hearer, or audience member, in order to construct a coherent story. This information may be supplied either automatically or strategically from texts, schemas, scripts, and concepts from the narrative itself, as well as from the world external to the narrative.<sup>185</sup> Since this mechanism for sense making is embedded deep within the neurological structures of the human brain, we usually do not even realize that our minds are cobbling together a work of art from the fragmentary discourse. However, even when we have to “work” for it, these pathways are so well worn that the effort is typically minimal.<sup>186</sup>

### Narrative Persuasion in Cognitive Perspective

Before this chapter concludes, we should address what makes narratives so persuasive. Critics have long recognized that stories influence the real world beliefs of audience members in powerful ways. Plato, for example, recognizes that stories and poems powerfully affect the values, beliefs, and practices of readers quite apart from any propositional arguments. He believed that

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184 van den Broek, Katinka Beker, and Marja Oudega, “Inference Generation in Text Comprehension,” 111.

185 See further, Hogan, *Cognitive Science*, 117–18.

186 There is some debate in the cognitive sciences as to what particular structures of the brain are responsible for our inferential tendencies. However, the one with the most empirical support is provided through a framework known as “embedded cognition.” Structures, called “mirror neurons,” fire in the human brain such that a listener runs an internal mental simulation of the discourse and, in so doing, constructs the story, making necessary inferences based on real-life experiences and prior mental simulations. For an embedded cognition perspective on inference and text comprehension, see de Vega, “Embodied Inferences,” 182–209. For an alternative explanation, see the symbolist account by Walter Kintsch, *Comprehension: A Paradigm for Cognition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). For our purposes, the fact that cognitive scientists agree that inference generation is a universal human behavior is far more important than adjudicating between viable explanatory frameworks.



exposing children to fictional narratives that espoused questionable values could persuade them to impious views and thus improper behavior in the real world (cf. *Rep.* 3.391e).

... we shall say that both poets and prose authors get it wrong about mankind in matters of the greatest importance, that many of those who are happy are unjust, while the wretched are just, and that doing wrong is profitable, if you can get away with it, justice is the good of someone else, but a dead loss for oneself. Indeed we shall forbid them to say such things, but command them to sing and narrate the opposite of this (*Rep.* 3.392b [Emlyn-Jones & Preddy, LCL]).

Of particular concern was the effect Homer's portrayal of Achilles in the *Iliad* could have on young readers. For example, Plato refuses to accept Homer's account that Achilles will defend the Achaeans only if he receives gifts from them. Similarly, Plato refuses to believe that Achilles violently abused Hector's body or ransomed it to Priam.

We shall say that none of these stories is true and we shall not allow our people to believe that Achilles son of a goddess and Peleus, the most temperate of men and grandson of Zeus, and brought up under the eye of the most wise Chiron, was so fully distraught as to have within him two opposing afflictions: meanness with his greed for possessions, and, on the other hand, contempt for gods and men (*Rep.* 3.391c [Emlyn-Jones & Preddy, LCL]).

At stake for Plato is the influence these stories could exert on the young. Of course, the opposite was also true—stories could positively influence audience members' values and behavior, as is readily apparent both from Greek fables and from Plutarch's moralizing *Lives*, both of which only work if narratives change the way a person thinks or acts in the real world.<sup>187</sup> In Plutarch's own words:

I began the writing of my *Lives* for the sake of others, but I find that I am continuing the work and delighting in it now for my own sake also, using

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<sup>187</sup> On which, e.g., Christos A. Zafiroopoulos, *Ethics in Aesop's Fables: The Augustana Collection* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), esp. 1–44; Tim Duff, *Plutarch's Lives: Exploring Virtue and Vice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), esp. 1–98.



history as a mirror and endeavoring in a manner to fashion and adorn my life in conformity with the virtues therein depicted. For the result is like nothing else than daily living and associating together, when I receive and welcome each subject of my history in turn as my guest, so to speak, and observe carefully “how large he was and of what mien,” and select from his career what is most important and most beautiful to know. “And oh! What greater joy than this can one obtain,” and more efficacious for moral improvement? (*Tim.* 235.1–3 [adapted from Perrin, LCL])

Narratives provided Plutarch interactions with literary companions that challenged his own perspective and behavior, and he composed his *Lives* with the expectation of offering the same experience to his audience members.<sup>188</sup>

In recent years the persuasive power that stories possess has been explored theoretically and studied empirically.<sup>189</sup> One particularly interesting example comes from the study of the effects of television on sensitization to issues of race and bigotry. In the 1970s, bigotry and racism were strongly woven into the fabric of American society, despite progress made by the African American civil rights movement. Prejudice persisted (and persists to this day) despite calls for an end to racism through direct propositional arguments. However, researchers found that narratives proved to be a much more powerful persuasive tool. Specifically, they studied the impact of the 1970s CBS situation comedy *All in the Family* and the ABC miniseries *Roots* on diverse viewership and found that these television shows were able to sensitize viewers to systemic problems of racism and bigotry in ways that traditional argumentation had not.<sup>190</sup>

188 For a treatment of John's Gospel through the lens of Plutarch and other moralizing narratives, see Lindsey M. Trozzo, “Genre and Moral Utility: An Approach to Johannine Ethics in Light of Plutarch's *Lives*,” in *Johannine Ethics: The Moral World of the Gospel and Epistles of John*, ed. Christopher W. Skinner and Sherri Brown (Minneapolis: Fortress, Forthcoming). See also Lindsey M. Trozzo, “Exploring Johannine Ethics: A Rhetorical Approach to Moral Efficacy in the Fourth Gospel Narrative” (Ph.D. diss., Baylor University, 2016).

189 See, e.g., Melanie C. Green, Jeffrey J. Strange, and Timothy C. Brock, eds., *Narrative Impact: Social and Cognitive Foundations* (Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2002).

190 See Neil Vidmar and Milton Rokeach, “Archie Bunker's Bigotry: A Study in Selective Perception and Exposure,” *Journal of Communication* 24 (1974): 36–47; Philip Wander, “On the Meaning of ‘Roots,’” *Journal of Communication* 27 (1977): 64–69; Sandra J. Ball-Rokeach, Joel W. Grube, and Milton Rokeach, “‘Roots: The Next Generation’—Who Watched and with What Effect?,” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 45 (1981): 58–68, cited in Michael D. Slater, “Entertainment Education and the Persuasive Impact of Narratives,”

To this point we have only covered what we know instinctively: stories have the power to change us. In this section, we look at the psychological processes that help explain this phenomenon. In so doing, we will develop some insight into why the rhetoric of inference would be so effective among an audience to Mark's Gospel in a Roman imperial context. Essentially, we shall see that stories draw sympathetic readers/hearers into their worlds and allow them to experience a world that either challenges or confirms their own.

Cognitive psychologist Keith Oatley articulated a theory of *mimesis* as simulation that helps explain why stories are so effective at changing our minds and behavior.<sup>191</sup> Working from Aristotle's notion of *mimesis*, Oatley suggests that, when audience members experience a narrative, they automatically mentally simulate that narrative as the story progresses, playing an imaginary version of the narrative internally in their mind's eye. This internal mental simulation of the narrative confronts audience members with the emotional experiences of characters in the story and creates feelings of admiration, sympathy/antipathy, pity, hope, and fear. Ed Tan has termed this dynamic the "*diegetic effect*," which refers to the phenomenon whereby the narrative world invades the real world and envelops audience members.<sup>192</sup> In neuroscientific terms, the internal simulation of narrative, facilitated by mirror neurons, is cued when a person experiences a story. Audience members who deeply enter the narrative world tend to do so as side-participants or invisible witnesses within the story, meaning that they tend to experience the story as though they were there.<sup>193</sup>

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in *Narrative Impact: Social and Cognitive Foundations*, ed. Melanie C. Green, Jeffrey J. Strange, and Timothy C. Brock (Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2002), 164. See further Slater, "Entertainment Education," 157–81.

- 191 Keith Oatley, "A Taxonomy of the Emotions of Literary Response and a Theory of Identification in Fictional Narrative," *Poetics* 23 (1994): 53–74. See Aristotle's discussion of *mimesis* in the context of tragedy: audience members were meant to experience a catharsis, a purification, of pity and fear in response to those emotions in the tragedy itself (cf. *Poetics* 1449b 20–27). It must be admitted that the meaning of "catharsis" in Aristotle is difficult to ascertain and debated among scholars. See further Richard Janko, ed., *Aristotle: Poetics* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987), xvi–xx; John Anthony Cuddon and Claire Preston, *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1998), 115.
- 192 Ed S. Tan, "Film-Induced Affect as a Witness Emotion," *Poetics* 23 (1994): 10–13.
- 193 James W. Polichak and Richard J. Gerrig, "Get Up and Win!: Participatory Responses to Narrative," in *Narrative Impact: Social and Cognitive Foundations*, ed. Melanie C. Green, Jeffrey J. Strange, and Timothy C. Brock (Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2002), 72–75. See further, Oatley, "A Taxonomy," 53–74.

The role of mirror neurons in narrative participation ensures that audience members process stories just as they do events in the “real world.” As Gerrig has demonstrated, the mental simulation of the narrative works by making inferences on the basis of preexisting knowledge—and the experience of a story via mental simulation challenges, confirms, or otherwise links with preexisting knowledge.<sup>194</sup> As Thomas Scheff notes, “When we cry over the fate of Romeo and Juliet, we are reliving our own personal experiences of overwhelming loss, but under new and less severe conditions.”<sup>195</sup> In other words, the shared experience (in this case, loss of a loved one) catalyzes the emotional response, even when we are aware that what we are reading/viewing is fiction. In the absence of a shared experience, the internal simulation of the narrative alone prompts us to imagine and indeed experience such a loss via mirror neurons.<sup>196</sup> Importantly, the brain does not seem to distinguish between “fiction” or “nonfiction,” between “real world” or “story world,” when it comes to information processing—and it is this shared experiential medium that allows stories to subtly change a person’s perspective.<sup>197</sup> This conclusion is supported by empirical research in which Richard Gerrig and Deborah Prentice were able to sway participants’ beliefs about the value of penicillin by subtly suggesting, within a fictional story, that this antibiotic had actually caused more harm than good. When the participants left the story world, the fictional context was dropped, but its mark was left all the same.<sup>198</sup>

Slater has demonstrated that stories are able to succeed in convincing people, especially resistant audience members, by lowering their guards. Evidently, viewers’/hearers’ mental simulations substantially muffle their ability to make counterarguments (“Penicillin is great because...”). Of course, audience

194 See Gerrig, *Experiencing Narrative Worlds*, 157–241, esp. 208.

195 Thomas J. Scheff, *Catharsis in Healing, Ritual, and Drama* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 13.

196 Stein Bråten, ed., *On Being Moved: From Mirror Neurons to Empathy*, Advances in Consciousness Research 68 (Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2007); Marco Iacoboni, “Imitation, Empathy, and Mirror Neurons,” *Annual Review of Psychology* 60 (2009): 657–59.

197 Obviously, people can distinguish between “fiction” and “nonfiction,” but my point here is that the processes are the same and this enables knowledge and experiences acquired in the story to influence audience members in the real world. See further, Gerrig, *Experiencing Narrative Worlds*, 201–24; Jeffrey J. Strange, “How Fictional Tales Wag Real-World Beliefs: Models and Mechanisms of Narrative Influence,” in *Narrative Impact: Social and Cognitive Foundations*, ed. Melanie C. Green, Jeffrey J. Strange, and Timothy C. Brock (Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2002), 263–86.

198 Richard J. Gerrig and Deborah A. Prentice, “The Representation of Fictional Information,” *Psychological Science* 2 (1991): 336–40.

members may choose to extricate themselves from the narrative world in order to make counterarguments (though this can be very difficult<sup>199</sup>), but they are much less likely to produce such protestations while experiencing a story than when hearing propositional arguments (e.g., a list of statistics showing the increase in antibiotic resistant strains of bacteria since the implementation of penicillin).<sup>200</sup>

Perhaps this helps explain how *All in the Family* and *Roots* sensitized America to racism and bigotry: Once American television viewers were transported into the narrative worlds, they simply experienced the story as though they were “there” and learned “first hand” (as a side-participant) that, for example, racism is a systemic problem and that black people are no different than white people.<sup>201</sup> To be sure, it is ultimately the case that “information presented in fictions affects real-world judgments because it is initially accepted as true alongside all other types of information.”<sup>202</sup> In other words, one has to be a willingly engaged reader or viewer. However, once the decision to become a sympathetic, engaged audience member is made, the mental simulation takes place and the diegetic effect lowers one’s guard.

With counterarguments stifled by the *diegetic* effect, audience members are free to identify with characters and experience the entire spectrum of empathetic emotions within (and in response to) the story world. These experiences, in turn, ultimately influence how the story world affects their real world beliefs, values, and practices in ways that move beyond the power of a traditional persuasive argument. To place these conclusions in the context of the present study, as audience members experience Mark’s Jesus as the *kyriotic* Son they are subtly directed by the narrative to adopt that view of Jesus as their own in the real world.

When we imagine a performance of Mark’s Gospel in the decade following the Roman destruction of the Jerusalem temple, the benefits of the rhetoric

199 Tan, “Film-Induced,” 12.

200 Slater, “Entertainment Education,” 157–81.

201 Something similar has happened with shows like *Will and Grace*, *Glee*, and *Modern Family* regarding sensitization to LGBTIA issues. For many people, Will Truman, Kurt Hummel & Blain Anderson, Santana Lopez & Brittany Pierce, and Mitchell Pritchett & Cameron Tucker were their very first gay friends—and this friendship has been at least partly responsible for the change of public opinion on issues such as same-sex marriage. See, e.g., Jane D. Brown, “Mass Media Influences on Sexuality,” *The Journal of Sex Research* 39 (2002): 42–45; Sara Moroni, “America’s Closet Door: An Investigation of Television and Its Effects on Perceptions of Homosexuality” (B.A. Honors Thesis, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, 2014), <http://scholar.utc.edu/honors-theses/46>.

202 Gerrig, *Experiencing Narrative Worlds*, 224–37, quoting from 237.

of inference placed in a narrative format come into clearer focus. The notion of Jesus as a divine and Davidic king would easily be perceived as a challenge to the emperor in a milieu in which people were all too aware of the potentially dire consequences of such behavior. Setting *kyriotic* sonship within the rhetoric of inference not only allows for plausible deniability, but it also subtly directs audience members to arrive at this characterization on their own, which research demonstrates is much more effective than propositional arguments. Placing this rhetoric of inference in a *story* rather than a letter has the benefit of influencing audience members in a way that mitigates prior objections to the idea that Jesus should be viewed as Yahweh's functional equivalent and Davidic king. With their guards lowered, the narrative itself takes over and subtly inculcates *kyriotic* sonship in the minds of audience members.<sup>203</sup> Subsequent chapters will detail how this subtle inculcation works across Mark's Gospel.

### Conclusions

The preponderance of evidence from literacy rates and the oral nature of the first-century milieu suggest that Mark's Gospel was first experienced through public readings performed from a manuscript. This single conclusion has remarkable implications for understanding Mark and its portrait of Jesus, especially owing to the continuous temporal flow of performance over which the audience held very little control. Both Quintilian and cognitive scientists agree that hearing a text in performance is more demanding upon the hearer, who must contend with distractions, not only from the performance space itself, but also from the narrative, which does not stop until it has reached its conclusion.

In addition to addressing the oral/aural aspects of first-century narrational experiences, we discussed five categories of figures that were designed to invite and encourage inference generation: intentional omission, *emphasis*, irony, appropriation and reversal, and allusion. While more figures could have been discussed, these are undoubtedly primary and form a basis from which the others—including question and answer, disclosure of secret information, and open-ended comparisons—may be understood. These figures left certain information shrouded, whether specific information was omitted (intentional

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203 To be sure, this explanation of the function and power of the rhetoric of inference in Mark's Gospel goes well beyond any ancient explanations, but it fits well within ancient expectations for narratives to change people through the strategic omission of material.

omission), made intentionally ambiguous (*emphasis*), misdirected (irony), subverted (appropriation and reversal), or cloaked in a sometimes cryptic and subtle comparison (allusion). All of these figures draw audience members to try to discover meaning on their own. This intentionally less direct approach aimed at enhancing an argument's power to convince in a way that surpassed a more direct approach.<sup>204</sup> This indirect approach capitalizes on the incomplete nature of narratives and the human brain's adaptations for inference generation. It also strategically blocks counterarguments from minds resistant to change and offers listeners new vicarious experiences that challenge, confirm, or otherwise change their perspectives. Strategically omitted material in a well-crafted narrative is a persuasive tool indeed.

To support the calculated omission of material, we shall find that Mark's Gospel leverages an explicit tool: testimony, ancient and recent, human and divine. Testimony is used to scaffold Mark's portrait of Jesus by giving the audience specific proclamations to cue interpretation of the allusive figures that also populate the narrative. Together, allusive figures and testimony serve as narrative forms of Quintilian's darts lodged into the minds of those in the audience (*Inst.* 9.2.75). Once sympathetic audience members are engulfed by the story world, these darts aim at convincing audience members through vicarious experiences that indicate Mark's Jesus's status as the *kyriotic* Son; that is, listeners will experience Mark's Jesus as the one who uniquely shares *synkristic* relationships with, and assimilation to, both David and Yahweh in ways that challenge their previously held schemas and prompt a change in perspective. But we are getting ahead of ourselves. We must begin with the prologue . . .

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204 E.g., Demetrius, *Eloc.* 222.

## The Prologue (1:1–13) as Fertile Soil for *Kyriotic* Sonship

If *kyriotic* sonship were a symphony, its first movement would span from Jesus's cries for repentance and belief in God's good news (1:14–15) to the question about how David's Lord can be David's son (12:37).<sup>1</sup> Over the course of Mark 1:14–12:37, the Markan Jesus enjoys a *synkristic* relationship with the God of Israel through allusive language, *emphasis*, and *testimonia*, which work together to characterize him as a divine being in ways that encourage his assimilation to Yahweh. Yet Jesus is also the beneficiary of a *synkristic* relationship with David in ways that encourage audience comparison between Jesus and certain streams of thought about David, relating both his kingly rule and therapeutic activity.

As the narrative builds toward 12:37, the portrait of Mark's Jesus (and audience understandings of it) is developed with more and more explicit language connoting *kyriotic* sonship. This portrait comes to a head when the divine and Davidic elements of the characterization of Jesus intersect explicitly in 12:35–37. This infamous “son of David question” presents the audience with a gap that is not easily traversed: “David himself calls him, ‘Lord,’ so in what way is he his son?” (12:37). As we shall see, Mark 1:1–12:37 does not demonstrate *how* these divine and human aspects of the characterization of Jesus relate to one another, but leaves the matter for audience reflection. Indeed, this question will remain unanswered until Jesus's passion and resurrection (14:1–16:8).

In this chapter, however, we examine the prelude, as it were, to this *kyriotic* symphony, Mark 1:1–13. We begin our inquiry into Mark's conception of *kyriotic* sonship by focusing particularly on the use of testimony, *emphasis*,

<sup>1</sup> As an aid to the reader, I divide my treatment of Mark 1:14–12:37 into two chapters (1:14–9:13 and 9:14–12:37). This narrative turning point in the characterization of Mark's Jesus (12:35–37) is to be distinguished from Mark 8:27–9:13, which, to varying degrees is commonly (and quite rightly) taken as the turning point of Mark's Gospel as a whole. For a thorough discussion of the interpretive issues and options, see, most recently, Gregg S. Morrison, *The Turning Point in the Gospel of Mark: A Study in Markan Christology* (Eugene, Ore.: Pickwick, 2014). For his own part, Morrison ultimately argues that Peter's testimony and the transfiguration should be understood *together* to form the turning point in the narrative. See his *Turning Point*, 98–164.



and allusive language to plant seeds of the characterization of Mark's Jesus as the *kyriotic* Son in the opening lines of the narrative. These rhetorical figures offer hints at this characterization that will develop, with increasing clarity, over the course of the narrative. Thus, the prologue serves as fertile soil for *kyriotic* sonship, preparing the audience for what is to come. At this early stage, however, the audience only sees Mark's Jesus as though through a veil that promises to be raised as the narrative progresses. We begin by attending to the function of narrative beginnings within ancient literary theory.<sup>2</sup>

### Mark's Prologue and Ancient Narrative Beginnings

#### *Narrative Beginnings in Ancient Theory and Practice*

It is difficult to overstate the importance of the beginning of a story,<sup>3</sup> since, in the words of Aristotle, it paves the way for what follows (οἷον ὁδοποιήσις τῷ ἐπιόντι; *Rhet.* 3.14.1). Indeed, this principle held true not only for the πρόλογος of epic poems, but also for the προοίμιον of speeches; even the prelude (προαύλιον) in flute playing was thought to prepare the audience for what followed (*Rhet.* 3.14.1). These beginnings allowed the performer to introduce the main subject,

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- 2 While our focus is on narrative beginnings in antiquity, a great deal has been written on narrative beginnings in critical theory. For a thorough and helpful discussion of narrative beginnings in modern literary, see Mikeal C. Parsons, "Reading a Beginning/Beginning a Reading: Tracing Literary Theory on Narrative Openings," *Semeia* 52 (1990): 11–31. Parsons's metacritical analysis highlights the fact that, apart from certain poststructuralist readings, like those of Derrida or Said, modern literary critics typically find a connection between a narrative's beginning and the story that follows, even if there is disagreement on the nature of that connection. For dissenting voices, see Edward W. Said, *Beginnings: Intention and Method* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985); Jacques Derrida, "Living on: Border Lines," in *Deconstruction and Criticism*, ed. Harold Bloom et al. (New York: Continuum, 1980), 75–176; Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).
  - 3 For the most recent work engaging the beginning of Mark's narrative, see Hans-Josef Klauck, *Vorspiel im Himmel?: Erzähltechnik und Theologie im Markusprolog*, BibS(N) 32 (Neukirchen: Neukirchener, 1997); Rikki E. Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus in Mark*, WUNT 2/88 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 54–57; M. Eugene Boring, "Mark 1:1–15 and the Beginning of the Gospel," *Semeia* 52 (1990): 43–81; Frank J. Matera, "The Prologue as the Interpretative Key to Mark's Gospel," *JSNT* 34 (1988): 3–20. For further discussion of narrative beginnings in ancient literature, see Dennis E. Smith, "Narrative Beginnings in Ancient Literature and Theory," *Semeia* 52 (1990): 1–9.



which inevitably would help the audience better understand the story by telling them *how* to hear the story from the very beginning.

Aristotle describes dramatic prologues, along with other narrative beginnings, thusly:

But in speeches and epic poems the exordia provide a sample of the subject, in order that the hearers may know beforehand what it is about, and that the mind may not be kept in suspense, for that which is undefined leads astray; so then he who puts the beginning, so to say, into the hearer's hand enables him, if he holds fast to it, to follow the story . . . Similarly, tragic poets make clear the subject of their drama, if not at the outset, like Euripides, at least somewhere in the prologue, like Sophocles, [when he added the line to the prologue] "My father was Polybus."<sup>4</sup> It is the same in comedy. (*Rhet.* 3.14.6).

The prologue introduced the audience to the opening action of the drama. Prologues, as direct appeals to the audience, also served to catch the audience's attention in order that they might follow the story more carefully (*Rhet.* 3.14.7). Similarly, Quintilian writes that the function of these beginnings<sup>5</sup> is

to prepare our audience such that they will be disposed to lend a ready ear to the rest of our speech. The majority of authors agree that this is

4 Here Aristotle only quotes the first clause of the line that he is intending to evoke: "My father was Polybus of Corinth, my mother the Dorian Merope. I was considered the greatest among the people in that town, until a chance event occurred . . ." (Sophocles, *Oed. Tyr.* 774–775). This line forecasts what is going to happen to Oedipus, who, though he became the King of Thebes, was destined from his birth to murder his father and marry (and bear children with) his mother. However, it is worth noting that this line, cited by Aristotle as part of the prologue, falls midway through the play, rather than at its beginning; evidently, it was nevertheless instructive of the forecasting role of the prologue.

5 While Quintilian's discussion pertains specifically to the prooemium, the fact that he is mirroring, to a degree, the parallel discussion in Aristotle discussed above (*Rhet.* 3.14.1–6), suggests that this discussion of "beginnings" would move beyond a prooemium or exordium to dramatic prologues, as well. Note especially Quintilian's appeal to the prelude of a lyre player in *Inst.* 4.1.2 (cf. Aristotle's flute player). Cf. Merle M. Odgers, "Quintilian's Rhetorical Predecessors," *TAPhA* 66 (1935): 25–36. On Quintilian more generally, see Jorge Fernández López, "Quintilian as Rhetorician and Teacher," in *A Companion to Roman Rhetoric*, ed. William Dominik and Jon Hall (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2007), 307–22.

best accomplished in three ways:<sup>6</sup> by making the audience well disposed, attentive and ready to receive instruction (4.1.5)<sup>7</sup>

Finally, Lucian of Samosata (second century CE) adopted this function of the narrative beginnings wholesale in his discussion of the historical preface (φροίμιον) in his *How to Write History* (53):

For they [the audience] will give him their attention if he shows that what he is going to say will be important, essential, personal, or useful. He will make what is to come easy to comprehend and very clear, if he sets forth by way of preface the causes and outlines the main events that will happen.<sup>8</sup>

There was thus wide agreement that the beginning of a narrative introduces the main subject to the audience in order that they might be sympathetic, attentive, and prepared hearers.<sup>9</sup>

6 These three means of focusing the audience's attention characterize the purpose of prooemia in antiquity; see Heinrich Lausberg, *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric: A Foundation for Literary Study*, ed. David E. Orton and R. Dean Anderson, trans. Matthew T. Bliss, Annemiek Jansen, and David E. Orton (Leiden: Brill, 1998), §§266–79.

7 Causa principii nulla alia est, quam ut auditorem, quo sit nobis in ceteris partibus accommodator, praeparemus.

8 προσέξουσιν μὲν γὰρ αὐτῷ, ἣν δεῖξῃ ὥς περὶ μεγάλων ἢ ἀναγκαίων ἢ οἰκείων ἢ χρησίμων ἔρεϊ: εὐμαθὴ δὲ καὶ σαφῇ τὰ ὕστερον ποιήσῃ, τὰς αἰτίας προεκτιθέμενος καὶ περιορίζων τὰ κεφάλαια τῶν γεγενημένων.

9 Smith ("Narrative Beginnings," 1–9) splits the various narrative beginnings into four distinct categories: prefaces, dramatic (and expository) prologues, incipits, and the "virtual preface." Smith divides the preface (exordium) and the prologue, presumably because they are distinct in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* 3.14.1–6, from which Smith draws heavily (and understandably so). However, Aristotle is clear that the *function* of the beginnings of epic poems and speeches (*exordia*) and the *function* of beginnings in Greek tragedies, like those of Euripides or Sophocles, are the same; namely, they preview the material for the audience to aide as a guide. Note the logical flow in *Rhetoric* 3.14.6:

"But in speeches and epic poems the exordia provide a sample of the subject, in order that the hearers may know before hand what it is about. . . Similarly, tragic poets make clear the subject of their drama, in not at the outset, like Euripides, at least somewhere in the prologue, like Sophocles [when he wrote in his prologue] 'My father was Polybus.' It is the same in comedy. So then the most essential and special function of the *exordium* is to make clear what is the end of or purpose of the speech".

Cf. *Rhet.* 3.14.1 where Aristotle likens the beginnings of speeches, epic poetry, and even flute playing; the name is different, but the function is the same.

Examples of these sorts of prologues are replete in ancient literature. Greek literature, particularly the tragedy, made ample use of the prologue. Since, unlike *bioi*, plays begin *in medias res*, their prologues helped the audience “be prepared to step into its flow.”<sup>10</sup> For example, Euripides’s *Hecuba* (fifth century BCE) opens as the phantom of Polydorus, Priam’s son, summarizes the events of the Trojan War, which ultimately led to Hecuba’s captivity (*Hec.* 1–55). Moreover, the audience learns from Polydorus’s phantom that Achilles has appeared above his tomb, demanding Polyxena offered as a sacrifice. Ominously, the audience is told: “And [Achilles] will obtain this prize, nor will his friends refuse the gift; and, on this very day, fate is leading my sister to her doom” (*Hec.* 36–45). These events give the audience context for understanding what will follow and preview the story itself.

Hecuba’s monologue that follows continues to foreshadow the main action of the play. Hecuba recounts a message from the gods, divine testimony via a dream<sup>11</sup> in which a deer slaughtered by a wolf was ruthlessly torn from before her (*Hec.* 90–93). She also has a vision, mediated by the phantom of Polydorus, in which Achilles’s phantom appears above his tomb, demanding one of the “luckless maids of Troy” (*Hec.* 93–95). The prologue ends with Hecuba’s heart-wrenching plea, “Therefore, I implore you, divine powers, avert this horror from my daughter, from my child” (*Hec.* 96–97)!

At this, the chorus of Trojan women enters and the narrative proper begins.<sup>12</sup> The dream, the vision, and terror that “some fresh disaster is in store, a new strain of sorrow will be added to our woe” (*Hec.* 54–85) all tell the audience what to look for. In this way, more than simply setting the context for the play, the prologue teaches the audience *how* to hear the rest of the play by elevating them, as it were, above the story and characters so that they know what to expect;<sup>13</sup> namely, Hecuba’s daughter Polyxena will be killed at the foot of Achilles’s tomb as a human sacrifice in exchange for the wind needed for the voyage home.

10 Jo-Ann A. Brant, *Dialogue and Drama: Elements of Greek Tragedy in the Fourth Gospel* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2004), 21.

11 Euripides, *Hecuba* 59–97, esp. 85–97.

12 Also noted by Mary Ann Beavis, *Mark*, Paideia (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 30.

13 On the notion that the prologue diminishes suspense for those in the audience, see Aristotle, *Rhet.* 3.14.6. This function is similar to what Meier Sternberg has termed the “reader-elevating configuration.” See Meier Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 164–65.

Prologues from epic poetry are also instructive. In the Greek tradition, the beginning of Homer's *Odyssey* (eighth to seventh centuries BCE)<sup>14</sup> is particularly illuminating. At the beginning of his epic, Homer offers a characterization of the main character, Odysseus, and it is this characterization that is activated for audience members throughout the epic proper.

Tell me, O Muse, of the man of many devices, who wandered full many ways after he had sacked the sacred citadel of Troy. Many were the men whose cities he saw and whose mind he learned, aye, and many the woes he suffered in his heart upon the sea, seeking to win his own life and the return of his comrades. Yet even so he did not save his comrades, though he desired it sorely, for through their own blind folly they perished—fools, who devoured the cattle of the Sun-god Helios; but he took from them the day of their returning. About all these things, goddess, daughter

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14 The prevalence of Homer's *Odyssey* and *Iliad* in first-century culture is beyond dispute, anchored in the warp and woof of society at the popular level, as well as in remaining a staple in the reading and writing curriculum throughout Greco-Roman education. As such, we may suppose that their place in the first-century world was firmly established, even as children's stories and popular novels today extend beyond the walls of classrooms and book clubs to broader society.

To be sure, these Homeric epics do not seem to have been equally enjoyed. Based on papyrological and other material evidence, Cribiore has demonstrated that the *Iliad* was more widely read than the *Odyssey*, perhaps because the latter was more advanced. Indeed, evidence from the papyri suggests that the books from the *Odyssey* that received the most attention are those that showcase key figures from the *Iliad*, whom Telemachus met in his voyage (Book 4) and whom Odysseus met in the Underworld (Book 11). The *Iliad*, however, was read in its entirety over the course of the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of education, though Books 1–6 were preferred (especially the first halves of those books). Of these six books, Books 1 and 2 received the most attention. Book 1 was probably prized because it introduced the main characters and themes, whereas Book 2 seems to be cherished in its own right apart from Book 1. Conversely, of all the books, Books 14, 19, 20, and 21 were the least favored. See Raffaella Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 195–97. See further Edward P. Dixon, "Descending Spirit and Descending Gods: A 'Greek' Interpretation of the Spirit's 'Descent as a Dove' in Mark 1:10," *JBL* 128 (2009): 765–66; Ronald F. Hock, "Homer in Greco-Roman Education," in *Mimesis and Intertextuality in Antiquity and Christianity*, ed. Dennis R. MacDonald, SAC (Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2001), 56–77; Dennis R. MacDonald, *The Homeric Epics and the Gospel of Mark* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2000), 1–8.

of Zeus, beginning wherever you desire, speak even to us.<sup>15</sup> (*Od.* 1.1–10 [adapted from Murray, LCL])

The prologue registered, the epic begins with a recounting of Odysseus's detention in Calypso's isle. Yet the audience has already been told what sort of man Odysseus will be: a complex hero—a well-travelled, culturally refined, military veteran who had sacked Troy, but whose journey home will be plagued with difficulty. They have learned that his men do not survive the journey (and why), but Odysseus's own fate is left unrevealed. This portrait subsequently informs and influences the audience's understanding of the epic proper as they experience the hero's journey home.

In the Latin tradition, Vergil's *Aeneid* (first century BCE) is instructive, not least because it was so popular in the Roman world, during the first century of the Common Era.<sup>16</sup> It is well established that the beginning of Vergil's *Aeneid*

15 ἄνδρα μοι ἔννεπε, μοῦσα, πολύτροπον, ὃς μάλα πολλὰ πλάγχθη, ἐπεὶ Τροίης ἱερὸν πτολίεθρον ἔπερσεν: πολλῶν δ' ἀνθρώπων ἴδεν ἄστεα καὶ νόον ἔγνω, πολλὰ δ' ὃ γ' ἐν πόντῳ πάθεν ἄλγεα ὃν κατὰ θυμόν, ἀρνύμενος ἥν τε ψυχὴν καὶ νόστον ἐταίρων. ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὥς ἐτάρους ἐρρύσατο, ἰέμενός περ: αὐτῶν γὰρ σφετέρῃσιν ἀτασθαλίῃσιν ὄλοντο, νήπιοι, οἳ κατὰ βοῦς Ὑπερίονος Ἑλίοιο ἴσθιον: αὐτὰρ ὁ τοῖσιν ἀφείλετο νόστιμον ἦμαρ. τῶν ἀμόθεν γε, θεά, θύγατερ Διός, εἰπέ καὶ ἡμῖν.

16 Many students will have first been introduced to Vergil's *Aeneid* while learning Latin. However, in the secondary stage their exposure to the *Aeneid* would develop considerably when they began intense study (and memorization) of classic poetry. In the rhetorical handbooks, its presence is sometimes assumed to the point that the text is not even identified as belonging to Vergil.

In his section on how to read aloud with the appropriate dramatic pauses, Quintilian appeals to the opening lines of the *Aeneid*, but at no point does he introduce the text as belonging to the exordium, the *Aeneid*, or even as belonging to Vergil (*Inst.* 11.3.33–38). Such is the familiarity assumed that Quintilian expected his readers to recognize the text by mere mention of select key terms from the passage. Quintilian also appeals to the *Aeneid* for examples par excellence of the figure of *emphasis*, (*Inst.* 8.3.83, 9.2.64). See further *Aen.* 4.419 in *Inst.* 8.2.3; *Aen.* 5.13, 6.34, 7.506, and 10.6 in *Inst.* 8.3.25; *Aen.* 4.359 in *Inst.* 8.3.54; *Aen.* 5.426 in *Inst.* 8.3.63; *Aen.* 2.262 and 3.631 in *Inst.* 8.3.84; *Aen.* 1.151 in *Inst.* 12.1.27. Centuries later, the *Aeneid* was still fresh in the minds of students as they went through primary and secondary education. There are at least seventy-two references to the epic poem in Aelius Donatus's magisterial *Ars Grammatica*, which first enjoyed wide use in the second half of the fourth century. Morgan (*Literate Education in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds* [Cambridge Classical Studies; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998], 106) finds twenty-two references to Book 1, seven to Book 8, six to Book 4, five to Books 2, 3, 6, 9, and 10; four to Books 7 and 11, three to Book 12 and one to Book 5. On Donatus's *Ars Grammatica*, see Martin Irvine, *The Making of Textual Culture. "Grammatica" and Literary Theory. 350–1100* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 58–61. The *Aeneid* seems to be as popular outside the classroom as within it. In the remains of Pompeii, some walls

introduces topics of particular interest for the epic and even previews its main purpose. The first seven lines are worth quoting in full:

Arms and the man I sing, who first from the coasts of Troy, exiled by fate, came to Italy and Lavine shores; much buffeted on sea and land by violence from above, through cruel Juno's unforgiving wrath, and much enduring in war also, till he should build a city and bring his gods to Latium; whence came the Latin race, the lords of Alba, and the lofty walls of Rome (*Aen.* 1.1–7 [Fairclough, LCL]).<sup>17</sup>

In these first few lines, Vergil deftly and concisely previews or summarizes the epic in its entirety. The *Aeneid* is, at its core, the story of the founding of Rome. The prologue will be activated among audience members again and again while they listen to a reading of the epic; the result will be a better understanding of the epic, in the parts, as well as the whole.

Narrative beginnings offered the audience an interpretive grid through which to understand the story that followed. As we shall see, the prologue of the Gospel of Mark functions similarly by improving audience comprehension of the characterization of Mark's Jesus as the *kyriotic* Son over the course of the narrative. However, the "preview" element of Mark's prologue is decidedly more muted than in other ancient literature, not least because the most important audience-elevating elements are so often couched in the rhetoric of inference.

### *The Function of the Markan Prologue*

Recent scholarly opinion is divided on the extent of the narrative beginning of Mark's Gospel. In 1966, Leander K. Keck set forth an argument that the

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of the city are covered with graffiti, over sixty percent of which is from Vergil. Specifically, of the seventy-nine graffiti writings catalogued by Alison E. Cooley and Melvin G. L. Cooley, forty-eight are from Vergil. Of those forty-eight texts, thirty-six are from the *Aeneid*: 1.1 (x12); 1.135; 1.192–3; 1.234; 2.1 (x14); 2.148; 5.110; 9.269; 7.1; 8.1; 9.404. We are then left with the impression that the *Aeneid* was not only quite popular with the educated elite, but also among those less fortunate. See Alison Cooley and Melvin G. L. Cooley, *Pompeii: A Sourcebook* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 220–21.

17 Arma virumque cano, Troiae qui primus ab oris Italiam, fato profugus, Laviniaque venitlitora, multum ille et terris iactatus et altovi superum saevae memorem Iunonis ob iram; multa quoque et bello passus, dum conderet urbem, inferretque deos Latio, genus unde Latinum, Albanique patres, atque altae moenia Romae.

prologue should include vv. 14–15.<sup>18</sup> His principal reasoning was that v. 15 forms an *inclusio* with v. 1 through the repetition of εὐαγγέλιον in vv. 1 and 15. For Keck, vv. 14–15 form the climactic statement that fulfills John’s proclamation of Jesus.<sup>19</sup> However, vv. 14–15 are better understood as the beginning of the story proper, rather than the climax of the prologue.

Matera has persuasively suggested three reasons for limiting the prologue to v. 13.<sup>20</sup> First, 1:1–13 is set off from the rest of the narrative by the desert setting, along with its references to the Spirit (vv. 8, 10, 12), which play relatively minor roles elsewhere in the Gospel (cf. 3:29; 12:36; 13:11). Second, John’s preaching is future oriented, while the Markan Jesus’s preaching in 1:14–15 refers to something that has already happened (note the transition marked by μετὰ δέ in 1:14). Third, 1:1–13 contains vital, but privileged information, imparted to the audience alone that enables the audience to better understand the characterization of Mark’s Jesus as the narrative progresses; this information stops at 1:13 and is largely kept secret from the characters in the main narrative. To Matera’s reasoning, Beavis rightly adds that Jesus does not speak until 1:14–15; in 1:1–13 the only speakers are the narrator, John, and the heavenly voice.<sup>21</sup> To these compelling data, I add that vv. 1–13 are set off from vv. 14–15 by an *inclusio* (based on ἄγγελος and ἔρημος), between 1:1–3 and 1:12–13.<sup>22</sup> Thus, in what follows, this study limits the narrative beginning of Mark’s Gospel to vv. 1–13.<sup>23</sup>

In terms of function, Mark 1:1–13 is probably best associated with Aristotle’s “dramatic prologue” (*Rhet.* 3.14.6). As such, it functions in concert with other prologues in ancient Greco-Roman literature: it sets the stage for the narrative

18 Leander E. Keck, “The Introduction to Mark’s Gospel,” *NTS* 12 (1966): 352–70. Keck was responding to the consensus set forth by Lightfoot that the prologue was made up of Mark 1:1–13 since vv. 9–13 contain vital background information (e.g., Jesus is from Nazareth in Galilee and that he is God’s Son). See Robert H. Lightfoot, *The Gospel Message of St. Mark* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1950), 15–20. For others in favor of ending the prologue at v. 15, see, e.g., Christopher S. Mann, *Mark: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 27 (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1986); John R. Donahue and Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark*, SP 2 (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2002); Boring, “Mark 1:1–15”; Adela Yarbro Collins, *Mark: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 130–55.

19 Keck, “Introduction,” 361.

20 Matera, “Prologue,” 3–20 (esp. 5).

21 Beavis, *Mark*, 32.

22 For more on this *inclusio*, see below.

23 For others ending at v. 13, see, e.g., Morna D. Hooker, *The Gospel According to Saint Mark*, BNTC 2 (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1991), 1–22; Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2002), 27–30; Donahue and Harrington, *Mark*, 59–69; Beavis, *Mark*, 31–32.



that lies ahead, offering an elevated vantage point from which the audience is to understand the rest of the story. This “panoramic view”<sup>24</sup> allows those in the audience to fill in narrational gaps<sup>25</sup> and “connect the dots” later on in the story<sup>26</sup> through retrieval of information from the prologue, cued in later episodes by hook words, schemas, and scripts. As we shall see, this relatively short prologue imbues the audience with the basic framework of Mark’s *kyriot*ic sonship by forming vital *synkristic* relationships between Mark’s Jesus and David (on the one hand) and Yahweh (on the other). To be sure, the prologue does not contain the level of depth or detail found in the narrative as the story progresses, but it nevertheless plants seeds in the minds of the audience that, by the passion and resurrection, will have grown into Mark’s narrative portrait of Jesus.

While modern scholars do not usually identify the Markan prologue with the Aristotelian “dramatic prologue,” the notion that the Markan prologue previews the Gospel, whether in part or whole, is usually acknowledged to some degree.<sup>27</sup> For example, Benoît Standaert argued that, from a theatrical perspective, the prologue functions as an “avant-jeu,” which, though formally separate from the rest of the narrative, provides the audience with information that is unavailable to the characters in the story.<sup>28</sup> Similarly, Morna Hooker writes,

We need to take careful note of the information about Jesus with which Mark here provides us, for he expects us to hold it in our hands as a guide as we thread our way through the rest of the story, but we need

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24 Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (London: Routledge, 2002), 77, notes the frequency of “panoramic views” at the beginning or end of a narrative in modern literature.

25 For more on the use of intentional omission, what modern theorists have termed, “gap theory,” see Chapter Two above. For a more thorough discussion, see Kathy Reiko Maxwell, *Hearing Between the Lines: The Audience as Fellow-Workers in Luke-Acts and Its Literary Milieu*, LNTS 425 (London; New York: T. & T. Clark, 2010), 27–118, who addresses the exploitation of narrative gaps in both ancient and modern literary theory, as well as in Hellenistic narrative literature.

26 Similarly, Peter G. Bolt, *Jesus’ Defeat of Death: Persuading Mark’s Early Readers*, SNTSMS 125 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 46; Mark I. Wegener, *Cruciformed: The Literary Impact of Mark’s Story of Jesus and His Disciples* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1995), 99. However, neither Bolt nor Wegener draws on discussions in ancient literary theory.

27 For a sweeping analysis of Mark’s Gospel as a thoroughly “tragic” narrative, see Jeffery D. Jay, *The Tragic in Mark: A Literary-Historical Interpretation*, HUTH (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014).

28 Benoît Standaert, *L’Évangile selon Marc: commentaire* (Paris: Cerf, 1983), 42.

to remember that Mark is letting us into secrets which remain hidden throughout most of the drama, from the great majority of the characters in the story.<sup>29</sup>

Frank Matera offers a bolder analysis, arguing that the prologue serves as an interpretive key to the entire Gospel in that it introduces the Markan themes of the messiahship of Jesus (1:14–8:30); the necessity of listening to the beloved son (8:31–10:52); the “testing” of Jesus in Jerusalem (11:1–13:37); and the recognition that Jesus is the Son of God (14:1–16:8).<sup>30</sup> Similarly, Eugene Boring has identified five main Markan themes in the prologue:

1. the *power* of the Christ who is a manifestation of the power of *God*;
2. the *story* of the Christ as the key, climactic segment of history as the mighty acts of *God*;
3. the *weakness* of the Christ who is a representation of the weakness and victimization of humanity, and is thus the true power of *God*;
4. the *secrecy* of the Christ as Mark’s literary-theological means of holding divine power and human weakness together in one narrative;
5. the *disciples* of the Christ as the messianic people of *God*.<sup>31</sup>

Regarding the level of detail in the forecasting proposed by Matera and Boring, Mary Ann Beavis is probably correct that, while those themes can be found throughout the Gospel by “modern readers” with “eyes to see and ears to hear,” “it is questionable whether the prologue was designed by the evangelist to be as programmatic as these modern scholars suggest.”<sup>32</sup> Further, it is not self-evident that the prologue would function (for many in the audience) with that degree of specificity in the oral/aural environment in which audiences first experienced Mark’s Gospel.<sup>33</sup> To be sure, those with a high level of familiarity

29 Hooker, *Mark*, 32.

30 Matera, “Prologue,” 9–15.

31 Boring, “Mark 1:1–15,” 63–68 (emphasis original).

32 Beavis, *Mark*, 40.

33 Cognitive studies suggest that, when a story is experienced aurally rather than visually through reading written words, the temporal flow of the narrative influences *how* the audience experiences the story, particularly in terms of recall during the narrative. Instead, audience members experiencing Mark’s Gospel for the first time (and those whose exposure is relatively minimal) are more likely to pick up broad themes, which are in turn stored for later recall upon activation as the narrative progresses. See further Chapter Two above. For a full-length cognitive psychological study of the experience and transmission of oral traditions, see David C. Rubin, *Memory in Oral Traditions: The Cognitive*

with Mark's Gospel will hear in the prologue cues that trigger various elements of the narrative as they recall them; yet, even the ability to recall is dampened by the engagement required on the part of the hearer during the public reading of a narrative.<sup>34</sup> Rather than detailed intertextual echoes, as Beavis has noted, the following prominent broad themes would likely be detected from the prologue: the Markan notion of the "way," the identity of Jesus, his relationship to God, and his faithfulness in times of testing.<sup>35</sup>

Mark's Gospel begins with opaque and implicit hints at the characterization of Jesus. Instead of making the coming portrait of Mark's Jesus explicit, the prologue encourages those in the audience to infer on their own specific elements of the characterization of Mark's Jesus. In what follows, we focus on the most important aspects of the rhetoric of inference in the prologue: *testimony* in Mark 1:1, 2–3, 7–8, and 9–11, as well as *emphasis* in 1:3, 7, 13, and allusive language in 1:3, 8, 11, 13.

### Preparing the Way for the *Kyriotic* Son (1:1–8)

#### *Testimony from the Narrator (Mark 1:1)*

The Gospel begins with an incipit that, strictly speaking, is distinct from the prologue. However, since this study is interested in understanding the story of Mark's Gospel as it stands there is no reason to bracket it off from what follows in the prologue.<sup>36</sup> So, while the line, Ἀρχὴ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ υἱοῦ θεοῦ is not technically a testimony concerning the characterization of Mark's Jesus, it nevertheless announces what is to come.<sup>37</sup> Through the story's incipit,

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*Psychology of Epic, Ballads, and Counting-out Rhymes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995). For studies applying cognitive research to the notion of "recall" in the performance of biblical literature, see Cynthia Edenburg, "Intertextuality, Literary Competence and the Question of Readership: Some Preliminary Observations," *JSOT* 35 (2010): 131–48; Kelly R. Iverson, "An Enemy of the Gospel? Anti-Paulinisms and Intertextuality in the Gospel of Matthew," in *Unity and Diversity in the Gospels and Paul: Essays in Honor of Frank J. Matera*, ed. Christopher W. Skinner and Kelly R. Iverson, *SBLECL* 7 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), 7–32.

34 See further Chapter Two above.

35 Beavis, *Mark*, 40.

36 While an incipit functions, in a sense, as the title of a work and so is distinct from its prologue, there is nevertheless some content and structural overlap in that they both introduce what is to come. See further Smith, "Narrative Beginnings," 3–6.

37 Thus, we would translate the opening, Ἀρχὴ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ υἱοῦ θεοῦ, something like, "The beginning of the good news of Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God." On the

audience members are cued to listen for the beginning of the good news of Jesus.<sup>38</sup> It is thus significant that this seven-word line that begins the Gospel of Mark identifies Jesus as Χριστοῦ υἱοῦ θεοῦ. Thus, from the very beginning of the Gospel, Mark's Jesus is hailed as the "Messiah," "anointed one," or "Christ." However, the title, υἱοῦ θεοῦ is viewed by some as a later addition and thus deserves some discussion.<sup>39</sup>

Υἱοῦ θεοῦ is absent from  $\aleph^*$  Θ 28. l 2211 sa<sup>ms</sup> Or, though it was later added by the first corrector of  $\aleph$  (and is found in B D L W Γ latt sy co Ir<sup>lat</sup>, as well). While a decision in this case is difficult, it seems most likely that the title was present in the earliest recoverable text of the Gospel of Mark. Several factors point in this direction. First, the four uncial letters, ΥΥΘΥ, would have been prone to accidental omission via *homoioteleuton* given the similarity of the endings of the nomina sacra, even in the first line of the text. Second, the title itself plays such an important role in the testimonies to the sonship of Mark's Jesus in the narrative proper (1:11; 9:7; 15:39; cf. 3:11; 5:7; 14:61) that it is understandable and

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- function of 1:1 as the title or incipit of Mark's Gospel, see, most importantly, Boring, "Mark 1:1–15," 43–81. Cf., e.g., Kirsten Marie Hartvigsen, *Prepare the Way of the Lord: Towards a Cognitive Poetic Analysis of Audience Involvement with Characters and Events in the Markan World*, BZNW 180 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012), 103, 110–12; Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 129–32; John G. Cook, *The Structure and Persuasive Power of Mark: A Linguistic Approach*, Semeia Studies (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 138–40, 173; Joachim Gnllka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*, 2 vols., EKKNT 2 (Neukirchen: Neukirchener, 1978), 40. *Contra* Robert A. Guelich, "The Beginning of the Gospel Mark 1:1–15," *BibRes* 27 (1982): 5–15. Guelich opines, for example, that καθὼς γέγραπται never introduces a new sentence when used as an introductory formula, but this logic cuts against the grain of the *in medias res* nature of the prologue itself.
- 38 As Beavis rightly notes, whether the genitives Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ υἱοῦ θεοῦ are taken as subjective or objective here is irrelevant in Mark 1:1 since the evangelist does not draw a distinction between the preaching of Jesus and the preaching of the early church; the preaching about Jesus is the same as Jesus's own proclamation. See Beavis, *Mark*, 32–33. Cf. Hooker, *Mark*, 34.
- 39 For those arguing for the shorter reading, omitting υἱοῦ θεοῦ, see, e.g., Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 130; Joel Marcus, *Mark 1–8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 27 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 141; Adela Yarbrow Collins, "Establishing the Text: Mark 1:1," in *The Function of Biblical Texts in Their Textual and Situational Contexts*, ed. Todd Fornberg and David Hellholm (Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1995), 111–27; Bart D. Ehrman, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture: The Effect of Early Christological Controversies on the Text of the New Testament* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 72–75; idem, "The Text of Mark in the Hands of the Orthodox," in *Biblical Hermeneutics in Historical Perspective: Essays in Honor of Karlfried Froehlich*, ed. Mark Burrows and Paul Rorem (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 19–31; Peter M. Head, "A Text-Critical Study of Mark 1.1 'The Beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ,'" *NTS* 37 (1991): 621–29.

fitting for it to be found in the story's incipit. Third, it likewise fits the Markan tendency, detailed in this study and corroborated throughout elsewhere in the prologue, of embedding crucial aspects of the characterization of Mark's Jesus for the audience in the prologue, only to unpack them later over the course of the narrative proper through subtle rhetorical techniques. Those who argue against the inclusion of υἱοῦ θεοῦ tend to do so on the grounds that scribes would not often make such a mistake so early in the copying process,<sup>40</sup> or, as Metzger notes, on the basis that scribes often expanded titles and quasi-titles of books (cf. Rev 1:1).<sup>41</sup>

Two comments are in order. First, as to the purported unlikelihood of an accidental omission, Tommy Wasserman has demonstrated that omissions at the beginning of a book are not as uncommon as many have believed.<sup>42</sup> In fact, Codex Sinaiticus (א 01) provides the earliest witness of an accidental omission of this very title. As it turns out, accidental omissions of genitive forms of *nomina sacra* readily occur at the beginning of books: Codex Augiensis F (010) omits Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ in 2 Cor 1:1; Codex 489 omits τοῦ θεοῦ there, as well; the first hand of Codex Claromontanus D (06) leaves out Ἰησοῦ in Titus 1:1, which is subsequently corrected; and Codex 206 leaves out Χριστοῦ in 1 Peter 1:1.<sup>43</sup> Second, while it is not impossible to imagine a pious expansion of a shorter original beginning of Mark 1:1,<sup>44</sup> there is at present no example in the manuscript tradition of such an addition in other passages.<sup>45</sup>

Thus, the balance of the evidence supports the presence of υἱοῦ θεοῦ in the earliest recoverable text of Mark; as difficult as it may be to imagine, υἱοῦ θεοῦ seems to have been omitted from manuscripts early on, perhaps due to *homoioleuton* occasioned by the string of genitive nominae sacrae.<sup>46</sup>

40 See, e.g., Yarbrow Collins, "Mark 1:1," 111–27; Ehrman, *Orthodox Corruption*, 73.

41 Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2005), 62.

42 Tommy Wasserman, "The 'Son of God' Was in the Beginning (Mark 1:1)," *JTS* 62 (2011): 45–50.

43 Wasserman, "'Son of God,'" 47.

44 So Head, "Mark 1.1," 627; Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 225–26.

45 Wasserman, "'Son of God,'" 48–49.

46 For others arguing for inclusion of υἱοῦ θεοῦ in the earliest recoverable text of Mark, see, e.g., M. Eugene Boring, *Mark: A Commentary*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006), 30; Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 62; Moloney, *Mark*, 29 n. 11; Craig A. Evans, "Mark's Incipit and the Priene Calendar Inscription: From Jewish Gospel to Greco-Roman Gospel," *JGGR* 1 (2000): 67–81; Karl R. Kazmierski, *Jesus, the Son of God: A Study of the Marcan Tradition and Its Redaction by the Evangelist*, FB 33 (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1979), 1–9.

Returning now to Mark 1:1, these seven words form a testimony for the audience in which the narrator focuses attention on the characterization of Mark's Jesus, cuing them to hear the story as a proclamation of the good news of this Jesus, who is the Christ, the Son of God.

As we have seen above, narrative beginnings serve as a guide for the audience. In these opening words of the prologue, the audience learns that Mark's Jesus should be understood as "the Christ/Messiah, the Son of God." In the context of a house church with a mixed performance audience, the scenario presupposed by this study,<sup>47</sup> these titles would likely activate a variety of figures and images for the audience. The title υἱὸς θεοῦ will likely prime or activate schemas and related scripts of an anointed royal figure that bears striking resemblance to those associated with Roman emperors, like Caesar Augustus (Octavian), who were the object of popular worship all over the Roman Empire.<sup>48</sup>

Octavian was hailed as *divi filius* as early as 40 BCE, with numismatic evidence beginning in 30 BCE,<sup>49</sup> and Suetonius recorded legends of his divine birth—from Apollo—in a manner similar to that of Alexander, who was likewise believed to be a son of a god.<sup>50</sup> Such was the comparison between Caesar Augustus and the gods that he—and other living emperors—was hailed as a god and son of a god. For example, a representative decree from Croan began, "Since Emperor Caesar, son of god, god Sebastos, has by his benefactions to all men outdone even the Olympian gods. . . ."<sup>51</sup> However, the coming testimony from "Isaiah" adds Jewish shades to a Greek or Roman understanding of the title (cf. 1:2–3).

Those most entrenched in Jewish cultural memory may consider the possibility that the Markan Jesus is, or will become, a righteous, royal figure associated

47 See further Chapter One, above.

48 On the notion of divinity and divine sonship in the Roman world, along with its relationship to adoption practices in the same, see Michael Peppard, *The Son of God in the Roman World: Divine Sonship in Its Social and Political Context* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 31–85. On royal figures, rulers, and heroes, as "sons of god(s)," see further Adela Yarbro Collins, "Mark and His Readers: The Son of God among Greeks and Romans," *HTR* 93.2 (2000): 85–100; Evans, "Mark's Incipit," 67–81.

49 Lucien Cerfaux and J. Tondriaux, *Un concurrent du christianisme: le culte des souverains dans la civilisation gréco-romaine* (Tournai: Desclée, 1957), 315.

50 Suetonius, *Augustus* 94. Many others could be mentioned here; See further the thorough and up-to-date discussion in Peppard, *Son of God*, 31–50.

51 *I. Olympia* 53. Cf. Simon R. F. Price, *Rituals and Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 55.

with promises made to David in the LXX, DSS, and the Pseudepigrapha.<sup>52</sup> The promise for a Davidic heir in 2 Sam 7 LXX was reactivated, after lying dormant from the time of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah,<sup>53</sup> in the context of the Hasmonean dynasty, which provided a setting for the hope of the restoration of the Davidic monarchy.<sup>54</sup>

This revived hope can be demonstrated from texts found at Qumran. For example, the Rule of the Community (1QS IX, 11) expresses the expectation of a prophet and Messiahs of both Aaron and Israel, with the latter serving as an eschatological Davidic king. This coming Davidic king is predicted in 4QpIsa<sup>a</sup>, which describes the shoot of Jesse, the Messiah of the line of David, when commenting on Isa 11:1–5 (cf. 4Q161 VIII–X, 11–25). This king is pictured destroying the enemies of Israel in the War Scroll (cf. 1QM V, 1–2).<sup>55</sup>

The picture from Qumran is supported in the Psalms of Solomon in which the Son of David is portrayed as a prophet, but also as a king, the Messiah (ὁ χριστός), who defeats the nations and drives out the enemies of Israel.<sup>56</sup> This Messiah will be the Lord's king (Ps. Sol. 17:21), destroying Israel's enemies (17:22–25) and leading her in equality and justice (17:26–42). The rule of this "Son of David," the "Messiah" will be thought of as the rule of the Lord himself (17:32–46).<sup>57</sup> It is this hope for a Davidic messiah that is taken up into reflection on the coming "son of humanity" (Dan 7:13), linked with Psalm 2:7, and, in all likelihood, manifested in reflection on the Messiah as the "son of God" in texts

52 See further Adela Yarbro Collins, "Mark and His Readers: The Son of God among Jews," *HTR* 92.4 (1999): 393–408. Cf. Joel Marcus, *Mark 8–16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 27A (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 1104–07; Adela Yarbro Collins and John J. Collins, "Messiah and Son of God in the Hellenistic Period," in *King and Messiah as Son of God: Divine, Human, and Angelic Messianic Figures in Biblical and Related Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 48–74.

53 LXX Hag 2:21–23; Zech 3:8; 4:11–14. See further John J. Collins, *The Scepter and the Star: Messianism in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ABRL (New York: Doubleday, 1995), 31–32.

54 Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 53.

55 The identity of this "Prince of the Congregation" as a Davidic king is sometimes disputed. See, e.g., C. D. Elledge, "The Prince of the Congregation: Qumran 'Messianism' in the Context of Milhama," in *Qumran Studies: New Approaches, New Questions*, ed. Michael T. Davis and Brent A. Strawn (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 178–207.

56 E.g., Ps. Sol. 17:21–25; cf. 17:32–46; 18:1–12.

57 Other traditions (e.g., Testament of Solomon) will associate this Son of David with therapeutic powers. These traditions will later be activated for members of the audience familiar with Jewish cultural memory through allusive language in, e.g., Mark 1:23–27; 3:7–12; 5:1–20; 10:46–52. See further *ad loc* in Chapters Four and Five below.



like 4Q246, which presents a figure who “will be called the Son of God, they will call him the son of the Most High.”<sup>58</sup>

While Joseph Fitzmyer has objected that this figure is technically not a messiah because he does not explicitly bear the title,<sup>59</sup> any “successor to the Davidic throne in an eschatological context is by definition a messiah” (cf. Ps 2; 2 Sam 7; 4Q174 [4QFlor]).<sup>60</sup> Thus, the schemas and scripts evoked by titles like *ὁ χριστός* and *υἱὸς θεοῦ* pertain to a Davidic royal messiah, often as a political figure of some kind.<sup>61</sup> While it is unclear at this point, the narrative will later clarify how Mark’s Jesus both fits and breaks with scripts associated with a Davidic Messiah.

Those in the audience familiar with Paul’s letter to the Romans may interpret the titles in light of Rom 1:3–4, where Jesus is described as a Davidic figure who becomes the Son of God through his resurrection from the dead, but is also related to God inasmuch as he is called *κύριος*. Audience members need not have encountered the actual text of Romans (or 4Q246 above) to be influenced by it; moreover, Romans itself, along with texts like 4Q246, are drawing on broader, more fundamental notions of the divine sonship of royalty.<sup>62</sup> Any number of these streams will be confirmed for audience members when they hear Mark 1:3, which associates Mark’s Jesus with God via *emphasis*<sup>63</sup> through the ambiguity inherent in *κύριος* (see below).

Whatever cultural scripts and schemas are activated for each audience member, both the Davidic and the divine will have been triggered in relation to the characterization of Mark’s Jesus by the prologue’s end. Further, though the audience has no way of knowing it yet, the Davidic and divine connotations made available by *Χριστός* and *υἱὸς θεοῦ* will become increasingly pronounced

58 ברה די אל יתאמר ובר עליון יקרונה בזיקא (4Q246 II, 1).

59 Joseph A. Fitzmyer, “The Aramaic ‘Son of God’ Text from Qumran Cave 4 (4Q246),” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls and Christian Origins* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 60.

60 Adela Yarbro Collins and John J. Collins, *King and Messiah as Son of God: Divine, Human, and Angelic Messianic Figures in Biblical and Related Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 71.

61 That the Messiah in Pss. Sol. 17:21–25 is a political figure holds true whether or not this Messiah was to literally crush Rome with his rod of iron (17:24a) or metaphorically depose them with his wise and convicting rhetoric (17:24b). In either case, the Messiah posed a political threat to the enemies of Israel.

62 Collins and Collins, *King and Messiah as Son*, 1–100. The divine sonship of the king is particularly evident in the Greek translation of Israel’s psalms. See, e.g., LXX Ps 44:7; 88:27; 109:3.

63 On the ancient rhetorical figure of *emphasis*, see Quintilian, *Inst.* 9.2.64–99 *Rhet.* 4.53.67–68. See further Chapter Two above.

as the narrative progresses. For this reason, even audience members unfamiliar with Jewish schemas and scripts will, sooner or later, associate Mark's Jesus as "the Christ" and "Son" with Davidic scripts *in addition to* the divine associations created by language linked to divine figures in Greek and Roman culture, beginning with υἱὸς θεοῦ in the story's incipit (cf. 10:46–52).

So, beginning at Mark 1:1, audience members familiar with Jewish and Christian scripts and schemas surrounding David will initiate a *synkristic* relationship between David and Mark's Jesus on the basis of the titles associated with David (especially Χριστός). Others will favor a connection with divinity along the lines of the emperor (especially υἱὸς θεοῦ). These relationships will be detectable to varying degrees among those in the audience at this point. As we saw in Chapter Two, allusive language often implies a comparison between two figures, allowing the audience to infer things about the beneficiary of that relationship (Mark's Jesus) that go beyond that which is made explicit.<sup>64</sup> Since both titles, Χριστός and υἱὸς θεοῦ, carry latent Davidic undertones and play an increasingly significant role as the narrative progresses,<sup>65</sup> the collocation of Χριστός and υἱὸς θεοῦ sets the stage for a depiction of Mark's Jesus as the hoped for Davidic messiah. However, the details of that Davidic sonship remain unclear—especially given the divine connotations embedded in υἱὸς θεοῦ—left to audience speculation at this initial point in the prologue. The schemas associated with divine beings of various sorts, called υἱοὶ θεοῦ, ensure that, whatever else this Jesus the Messiah is, he may be a divine being. Thus as the "Messiah" and "God's Son," the Markan Jesus will be some divine royal figure, but the audience is left in suspense as the prologue continues with a testimony attributed to the prophet Isaiah (1:2–3).

This cryptic, though suggestive, portrait of Mark's Jesus embedded in the story's incipit is confirmed<sup>66</sup> in the remainder of the prologue by a series of

64 See Chapter Two above.

65 Cf. On Jesus as Χριστός, see on Mark 8:29 and 14:61 in Chapters Four and Five, respectively. On Jesus as υἱὸς θεοῦ, see 1:11, 9:7; 14:61 (ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ εὐλογητοῦ); 15:39. As I will demonstrate below, these titles (and others assigned to the Markan Jesus) should not be viewed as completely autonomous, but rather as part of the same narrative matrix that, together with the words and deeds of the Markan Jesus, what others say about him, and what he says in response, form the foundation of the characterization of Mark's Jesus. See further above in Chapter One.

66 The central function of both *testimonia* and *emphasis* is the demonstration or the confirmation of one's argument in the minds of those in the audience, though they arrive by varied (and complementary) degrees of directness. On *testimonia*, see Cicero, *Top.* 20.73–78; cf. 2.7–8. On *emphasis*, see Quintilian, *Inst.* 9.2.64–99 *Rhet.* 4.53.67–68. On confirmation (and its corollary, refutation), see Theon, *Prog.* 93–96 (cf. 74, 76–78; 101; 103; 104–106;

expanding testimonies and uses of *emphasis*, each clarifying the other in succession. Yet, these testimonies and rhetorical clues will not make the details of the characterization of Mark's Jesus explicit, leaving much to be inferred by the audience, who must wait for further revelation as the narrative proceeds. Thus Jack Dean Kingsbury is correct that, "rhetorically, this verse [1:1] is critical already in informing the reader of Mark's own conception of Jesus."<sup>67</sup> However, what precisely that conception entails is by no means clearly or fully articulated. Rather, it will be unfolded, progressively through the rhetoric of inference, implanted in the narrative for perceptive members of the audience to detect as the narrative approaches the passion and resurrection.

*Testimony Drawn from the Words of "Isaiah" (Mark 1:2–3)*

After the narrator's testimony, an ancient witness of high virtue is called forth. These witnesses were considered particularly trustworthy since they were beyond corruption through bribery or extortion (*Rhet.* 1.15.17; cf. Cic. *Top.* 19.73; 20.76–77). The evangelist began his Gospel with the particularly powerful rhetorical tool of testimonia, and that rhetorical effect is now intensified through the first of many ancient witnesses that will be called to testify over the course of the Gospel: the prophet Isaiah.

Isaiah's testimony<sup>68</sup> is of immense importance for our narrational understanding of Mark's Jesus. The question of whether Jesus or God is the referent of κύριος in Mark 1:3 has been a matter of debate. Those who take Jesus as the

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120; 129–130). See also Pseudo-Hermogenes 11; Aphthonius 10, 13; Nicolaus 21–22; 29–30. See further Chapter Two above.

67 Jack Dean Kingsbury, *The Christology of Mark's Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1983), 56.

68 The fact that Isaiah is not, in fact, the author of all of the words attributed to him in Mark 1:2–3 is irrelevant for their rhetorical force in the Gospel of Mark. Exod 23:20, Mal 3:1, and Isa 40:3 have been dislodged from their original contexts and joined together on the basis of their shared use of ὁδός. This rhetorical technique, known in Jewish circles as *gezerah shawah*, was widely accepted in the first century and there is no reason to believe it would have caused concern for the audience. From an ancient rhetorical perspective, the assignment of the conflated lines to Isaiah would give the testimony additional credibility by increasing both clarity and brevity. On the importance of these three aspects of compositional practice in ancient theory, see Theon, *Prog.* 79–93. For a dated, though still helpful, discussion of the relationship between Jewish rhetorical tools and Hellenistic rhetoric and modes of interpretation, see the early work of David Daube: "Rabbinic Methods of Interpretation and Hellenistic Rhetoric," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 22 (1949): 239–64 and "Alexandrian Methods of Interpretation and the Rabbis," in *Essays in Greco-Roman and Related Talmudic Literature*, ed. Henry A. Fischel (New York: Ktav, 1977), 165–82.

referent<sup>69</sup> often point to the narrative flow of the prologue itself, as well as to the alteration of the LXX's *τρίβους τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν* to *τρίβους αὐτοῦ* in Mark 1:3. They also tend to highlight the use of σου in 1:2, in order to argue that Jesus is the sole referent of κύριος in Mark 1:3. For example, Adela Yarbro Collins lists several reasons for taking the referent as Jesus, primarily located within the narrative sequence of events in 1:2–15: the sayings attributed to John in vv. 7–8 imply Jesus as a referent, e.g., the reference to the coming one's sandals in v. 7; the association of Jesus with the Spirit; the statement in v. 14 that the public activity of Jesus began only *after* the end of John's ministry.<sup>70</sup> Similarly, Kingsbury argues that "Mark quotes the OT passages that lie behind 1:2–3 in such a form and context that the four genitives of the pronouns 'you' and 'he' and the noun 'Lord' refer exclusively to 'Jesus Messiah, the Son of God' (1:1, 11) and not, as originally, to 'God' (Isa 40:3; Mal 3:1)."<sup>71</sup>

Others, though certainly fewer in number, have suggested that God, rather than Jesus, is the referent of κύριος here in Mark 1:3, whereas Jesus is addressed in 1:2. For example, Dieter Lührmann writes, "Der κύριος, dessen Weg es zu bereiten gilt, ist auch bei Mk noch Gott selbst im Unterschied zu dem in 2 angesprochenen Sohn."<sup>72</sup> Obviously, the referent of κύριος in Isaiah 40:3 LXX is Yahweh, but the accompanying reasoning for an *exclusive* reference to Yahweh is sometimes troubling. For example, Klyne Snodgrass asserts, "κύριος is usually used of Jesus only in the vocative [in Mark]."<sup>73</sup> However this begs the question of the application of κύριος to the Markan Jesus, rather than offering corroborating evidence. Edwin Broadhead, for his part, simply points to Yahweh as the explicit referent of Isa 40:3. However, in doing so he undervalues ambiguity and overvalues the role of intertextual context.<sup>74</sup>

69 Krister Stendahl, *The School of St. Matthew, and Its Use of the Old Testament* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1954), 48; C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Gospel according to Saint Mark: An Introduction and Commentary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 39–40; Kingsbury, *Christology*, 59; Robert Guelich, *Mark 1–8:26*, WBC 34A (Waco: Word, 1982), 11; Rudolf Pesch, *Das Markusevangelium: Kommentar zu Kap. 1,1–8,26*, vol. 1, 2 vols, HTKNT 2 (Freiburg: Herder, 1991), 77; Hooker, *Mark*, 35; Moloney, *Mark*, 32; R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 64; Boring, *Mark*, 36–37; Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 137; Beavis, *Mark*, 33–34.

70 Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 137.

71 Kingsbury, *Christology*, 59.

72 E.g., Dieter Lührmann, *Das Markusevangelium*, HNT 3 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1987), 34.

73 Klyne R. Snodgrass, "Streams of Tradition Emerging from Isaiah 40:1–5 and Their Adaptation in the New Testament," *JSNT* 8 (1980): 34.

74 Edwin K. Broadhead, *Naming Jesus: Titular Christology in the Gospel of Mark*, JSNTSup 175 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999), 138. More generally, Broadhead's analysis suffers

The amount of scholarly discussion on this issue testifies to the ambiguity inherent in the text. Given the narrative flow to this point, it is highly likely that most members of the audience would understand the Markan Jesus as the referent (cf. v. 9). However, the line, “prepare the way of the Lord!” also will probably activate scripts and schemas associated with Isaiah 40:3 LXX for those audience members familiar with Isaianic tradition.<sup>75</sup> These audience members will now be faced with a dilemma. On the one hand, the narrative that follows favors the Markan Jesus. On the other hand, the Isaianic traditions, evoked by καθώς γέγραπται ἐν τῷ Ἡσαΐα τῷ προφῆτῃ (1:2), favors Yahweh. To make matters more complex, in a performance setting the lector does not pause her or his performance for the audience to figure out the referent; rather, the audience may well be left puzzling at the ambiguity of the proclamation as they are swept off to the preaching of John (cf. 1:4–8). In other words, from the very beginning of the story, parsing out the characterization of Mark’s Jesus vis-à-vis Yahweh proves a difficult task.<sup>76</sup>

And herein lies the beauty of the figure of *emphasis*, which thrives on subtlety and exploits ambiguity for rhetorical advantage. Recall that in ancient rhetorical theory *emphasis* exploits a latent meaning embedded in a seemingly innocuous word or phrase.<sup>77</sup> According to common usage, this latent meaning was at least as important as that which had been (seemingly) plainly stated.<sup>78</sup> In this case, Yahweh would be the obvious referent of κύριος, since it comes in the voice of Isaiah. Yet, despite this Isaianic voice, the narrative flow urges that the Markan Jesus is the “latent” referent (cf. Mark 1:9).

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from an overly simplistic approach to the issue of ambiguity, as well as an isolationistic approach to the use of titles. For example, in his discussion of Jesus as κύριος (135–144), Broadhead only focuses on potential instances where Jesus is the referent of κύριος, rather than incorporating those instances where the Markan Jesus is depicted as *acting* like the κύριος of the LXX (cf. Mark 2:1–12; 4:39–41; 6:47–52).

75 This would be the case whether or not the verbatim wording of Isa 40:3 LXX came to mind for any particular audience member.

76 On this point, see similarly Marcus, *Mark* 1–8, 148. While he arrives at the conclusion by another path, Marcus also rightly points out that the overall narrative subordinates the Markan Jesus to Yahweh, even as it nearly equates the two figures (cf. 12:35–37) (148). Yet the narrative will preclude an unrefined equation between the two figures in 10:17–22 and 12:28–34; the narrative placement of these two episodes guide the audience to avoid equation in favor of assimilation. See further in Chapter Five (on 10:17–22) and Chapter Seven below.

77 Cf. Rhet. Her. 4.53.67; Quintilian, *Inst.* 6.3.48; see Chapter Two above.

78 Frederick Ahl, “The Art of Safe Criticism in Greece and Rome,” *AJP* 105 (1984): 178–79.

At this point, it is not yet clear for the audience what it means that the Markan Jesus and Yahweh are somehow joined through the ambiguity inherent in κύριος. However, this *emphasis* activates the notion of Jesus as a divine being and suggests a *synkristic* relationship with Yahweh (cf. υἱὸς θεοῦ in 1:1). While the meaning and import of this relationship are unclear at this early stage, it will be activated repeatedly through increasingly explicit allusive language as the narrative approaches 12:35–37. The cumulative effect will be the assimilation of Mark's Jesus to Yahweh.<sup>79</sup>

Thus, deciding who is who in Mark 1:2–3 is a complex endeavor that must wait for the rest of the story before much confidence can be attained. Likewise, Daniel Johansson goes too far when he opts for *both* the Markan Jesus and Yahweh as simultaneous referents to κύριος in 1:3.<sup>80</sup> As we saw in Chapter Two, the brain does not allow for simultaneous scripts in sense making; a choice must be made. At this early stage, the referent is unclear, though the context will later favor the notion that a script associated with the coming of Yahweh is being applied to the appearance of the Markan Jesus for baptism (cf. 1:9).

In these opening lines from the prologue, *emphasis*<sup>81</sup> focuses the audience's attention, even if only for a brief moment, on the relation between Mark's Jesus and God. This ensures that perceptive and diligent audience members will hear the rest of the story through the lens of suggestions of Jesus's assimilation to Yahweh. While *emphasis* only hints at a *synkristic* relationship at this point, the placement of this *emphasis* in the context of clarifying the initial testimony to the Markan Jesus as a type of royal Davidic messianic figure in Mark 1:1 (Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ υἱοῦ θεοῦ) may raise questions for perceptive hearers, if they realize that the Davidic Messiah is not typically associated so closely with Yahweh.<sup>82</sup> These first three verses, then, set in motion the rhetorical-narrative christological program of Mark's Gospel as a whole. Jesus will be depicted as a Davidic messianic figure, who is likewise characterized as a divine being assimilated to the God of Israel. The characterization of Mark's Jesus as the *kyriotic* Son has begun.

79 Cf. Mark 1:7; 1:23–27; 2:1–12; 2:23–28; 4:35–41; 5:1–20; 6:30–52; 12:35–37; 14:62. See further below on 1:9–11.

80 Daniel Johansson, "Kyrios in the Gospel of Mark," *JSNT* 33 (2010): 103–05. Cf. idem, "Jesus and God in the Gospel of Mark: Unity and Distinction" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 2011), 29; Klauck, *Vorspiel im Himmel?*, 87. For Jesus as "Lord" in the Gospel of Luke, see C. Kavin Rowe, *Early Narrative Christology: The Lord in the Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009).

81 For a discussion of *emphasis* in ancient rhetorical theory and literature, see Chapter Two above.

82 But see Ps. Sol. 17:32–46.

*Testimony Drawn from the Words of John (Mark 1:4–8)*

John, the ἄγγελος of Mark 1:2–3, now arrives on the scene to prepare the way of the “Lord.” Two questions occupy our attention at this point in the prologue. The first pertains to the sort of testimony that John offers in Mark 1:7–8; that is, what sort of witness is John? Second, what do we learn about Mark’s Jesus from John’s testimony once it is placed in rhetorical perspective?

Testimony of a famous person is a staple of first-century encomia;<sup>83</sup> as such, John is a fitting character to offer the opening testimony of the Markan Jesus. But what sort of testimony is John’s? On the one hand, John would be classified as a recent, human witness of good repute, whose virtue is based on his hard work (cf. Aristotle; 1.15.15–17; Cic. *Top.* 21.78). Unlike ancient witnesses, recent witnesses were considered of a variable quality since they were potentially susceptible to coercion. However, two important aspects of John’s characterization in the Gospel ensure that he would be treated as both virtuous and beyond coercion. First, he would shortly lose his life as a result of his testimony, with the implication that John was so sure of his testimony that he would die for it. Such confidence would presumably lend credence to the veracity of John’s claim (cf. Mark 6:14–29). Since John is dead, he is also beyond coercion. As such, John’s testimony comes with the clout of an (not so) ancient witness of high repute.<sup>84</sup> And yet, there is also a sense in which John functions narratively as much more than a human witness, however lofty, since he is characterized as the eschatological Elijah. This characterization is supported by allusive language for John’s message and dress, as well as the teaching of the Markan Jesus later in the narrative (see 9:11–13).

Mark 1:4–8 indicates the fulfillment of the testimony of the ancient “Isaianic” witness in 1:2–3 by ushering John onto the stage as the promised ὁ ἄγγελος, who heralds the coming ὁ κύριος, proclaiming the forgiveness of sins. Just as the “messenger” of Mal 3:1 LXX is later identified as Elijah (cf. Mal 4:4–5 LXX), the “messenger” of Mark 1:4–8 is described in terms that, for the informed audience members, activate schemas and scripts associated with Elijah.<sup>85</sup>

83 Theon, *Prog.* 110.

84 John’s presence in early Jesus traditions (cf., Mark 1:2–8; 1:14; 6:14–29; 8:28; 9:11–13; 11:30–33) suggests that, within some early Christian communities, John’s reputation would be comparable to the reputations of the great philosophers, poets, historians, and warriors of the past, which served as ancient witnesses par excellence (e.g., Homer noted in Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1.15.15–16).

85 Similarly, e.g., Jerry Camery-Hoggatt, *Irony in Mark’s Gospel: Text and Subtext*, SNTSMS 72 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 95; Moloney, *Mark*, 33; Beavis, *Mark*, 34–35.



Like Elijah, John is dressed in camel's hair and a belt (2 Kgs 1:8 LXX; cf. Zech 13:4 LXX).<sup>86</sup> The audience is then directed to think of John as Mark's Elijah *redivivus*, the eschatological Elijah.<sup>87</sup> This allusive language offers hints that John bears striking resemblance to the eschatological Elijah and, as with the *synkristic* relationships enjoyed by Mark's Jesus, has the rhetorical effect of elevating the lesser (John) toward equal status with the greater (the eschatological Elijah);<sup>88</sup> the result is an assimilation of John to Elijah. This latent

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- 86 Note the near verbatim agreement between ζώνην δερματίνην περὶ τὴν ὀσφὺν αὐτοῦ from Mark 1:6 and ζώνην δερματίνην περιεζωσμένος τὴν ὀσφὺν αὐτοῦ from 2 Kgs 1:8 LXX. John is also depicted as Elijah through imitation of Elijah's hairy body; compare ἐνδεδυσμένος τρίχας καμήλου in Mark 1:6 with the content addressable ἀνὴρ δασὺς in 2 Kgs 1:8. Cf. Hartvigsen, *Prepare*, 121. On content addressability and its function for audiences in the presence of a lack of verbatim correspondence, see Patrick C. Hogan, *Cognitive Science, Literature, and the Arts: A Guide for Humanists* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 43.
- 87 Similarly, Beavis, *Mark*, 35; Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 145–46; Marcus, *Mark* 1–8, 156. According to 2 Kgs 2:11–12 LXX, Elijah did not die but was instead taken up into the heavens by a whirlwind of fire in a chariot of fiery horses (cf. 1 Macc 2:58; Sir. 48:9). This concept, in turn, gave rise to the notion that Elijah enjoyed a heavenly existence and that Yahweh would, at some point in the future, send him back to earth to prepare the hearts of the people for the day of the Lord (Mal 4:4–6 LXX). Mark's assimilation of John to Elijah seems to reflect Jewish speculation of this nature and further strengthens the mysterious connection between the Markan Jesus and Yahweh in that, from the perspective of the narrative, just as Elijah prepared for the day of the Lord, John prepared for the coming of Jesus. This is not to suggest that there has been no debate on the matter. See the exchange years ago in *JBL*: Morris M. Faierstein, "Why Do the Scribes Say That Elijah Must Come First?," *JBL* 100 (1981): 75–86; Dale C. Allison Jr., "Elijah Must Come First," *JBL* 103 (1984): 256–58; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "More about Elijah Coming First," *JBL* 104 (1985): 295–96.
- 88 The elevation of the lesser to the status of the greater was a staple function of *synkrisis* in the extant *progymnasmata*. See, e.g., Ps-Hermogenes 18–20, which notes the comparison of Odysseus to Heracles. Among the *progymnasmata*, Theon's discussion is distinct for its insistence that comparisons of two figures between whom there is a great difference should be avoided (112–113): "Let it be specified that *synkrisis* are not comparisons of things having a great difference between them (for someone wondering whether Achilles or Thersites was braver would be laughable). But let comparisons be of likes and where we are in doubt which should be preferred because of no evident superiority of one to the other" // δὲ διωρίσθω, ὅτι αἱ συγκρίσεις γίνονται οὐ τῶν μεγάλῃν πρὸς ἄλληλα διαφορὰν ἔχόντων (γελοῖος γὰρ ὁ ἀπορῶν πότερον ἀνδρειότερος Ἀχιλλεὺς ἢ Θερσίτης), ἀλλ' ὕπερ τῶν ὁμοίων, καὶ περὶ ὧν ἀμφισβητοῦμεν πότερον δεῖ προθεσθαι, διὰ τὸ μηδεμίαν ὅραν τοῦ ἐτέρου πρὸς τὸ ἕτερον ὑπεροχὴν (112–113). Given the fact that the comparison between John and Elijah is made explicit in Mark 9:13, the evangelist must not share Theon's concerns, just as Ps-Hermogenes (18–20), Aphthonius (42), and Nicolaus (59–60) do not agree with Theon on this point. Alternatively, the evangelist's conception of John may be of a being

comparison in the prologue complements the more direct approach taken in Mark 9:13 when the Markan Jesus explicitly connects John with Elijah.<sup>89</sup>

John's character is thus more complex than first appearances might indicate. As far as Mark's Gospel is concerned, John functions as more than a human witness of good repute. As the eschatological Elijah, John serves as an inspired witness, whose testimony, like that of "Isaiah" and the narrator, coheres with the divine perspective on Mark's Jesus.

If John's testimony is inspired, what does the audience learn about Mark's Jesus from this prophet? John proclaims (ἐκήρυσεν) an encomiastic testimony,<sup>90</sup> lauding a coming one whose virtue far outstrips his own. John's testimony utilizes several of Theon's topics for encomium, namely praise of the person's

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much greater than a mere mortal, such that the comparison did not seem outlandish. Moreover, it should be noted that moving beyond the basic instruction of the *progymnas-mata* (whether reflected in Theon or another) was expected as the exercises took on a life of their own in real world settings. As we saw in Chapter Two, this use of allusive language in place of full-blown *synkrisis* (or *comparatio*) reflects the common recasting of training exercises (*synkrisis*) into narrational, "real world" settings (allusive language). In this case, the allusive language encourages inferences on the part of the audience through "indirect constructions," which we have found share much in common with *emphasis* in that they both, at their foundational level, use an indirect route to communicate more effectively than could otherwise be done using a direct route. This is especially the case when using symbols (like camel's hair, leather belt, locusts, honey, doves, wild animals, etc.). As we shall see as the narrative progresses, this exploitation of allusive language is one of the central tools exploited in Mark's presentation of Jesus. For further discussion of allusion and its relationship to *synkrisis*, see Chapter Two above.

89 If John is compared to Elijah, then it stands to reason that his successor, whom he proclaims, would have at least some connection to Elisha. Indeed, the Jewish tradition that Elisha's abilities far outstripped those of Elijah strongly supports this notion and offers some rationalization for John's particular focus on the surpassing greatness of the *ὁ ἰσχυρότερος*. For example, Sir 48:12–14 reads, "When Elijah was enveloped in the whirlwind, Elisha was filled with his spirit. He performed twice as many signs and marvels with every utterance of his mouth. Never in his lifetime did he tremble before any ruler, nor could anyone intimidate him at all. Nothing was too hard for him, and when he was dead, his body prophesied. In his life he did wonders, and in death his deeds were marvelous" (cf. 2 Kgs 2:19 LXX). Similarly, see Beavis, *Mark*, 34–35. However, the honor bestowed on the "coming one" in Mark, especially through the use of the nickname, *ὁ ἰσχυρότερος*, far outweighs any prestige granted to Elisha in Jewish tradition; the portrait of Mark's Jesus drives closer toward the God of Israel.

90 That is, a testimony that takes an encomiastic form, praising an individual for his or her virtuous actions and other good qualities (either intrinsic or extrinsic) belonging to a particular being, living or dead, human or divine (Theon, *Prog.* 109–112).

strength and ethical virtue that results in actions on behalf of others.<sup>91</sup> First, John testifies to the praiseworthy strength of the coming one through the invocation of a nickname. He calls the figure, the Mightier One (ὁ ἰσχυρότερος), who comes after him (ἔρχεται),<sup>92</sup> thus activating, for informed audience members, the relationship between Mark's Jesus and God suggested in 1:3 through allusive language associated with God in the LXX. Next, he praises the virtue of this coming one for his actions on behalf of others in that he will baptize with the Spirit, which further hints at Mark's Jesus's assimilation to Yahweh by applying actions once reserved for the latter to the former. We will discuss each in turn.

The use of the nickname ὁ ἰσχυρότερος calls forth images of virtue and strength for the audience. But by doing so through the use of a name associated with the God of Israel, the narrative uses *emphasis* to hint that this being, whom the narrative identifies immediately with Jesus (cf. 1:9–15), also bears remarkable similarity to God, or he is at least deserving of the comparison. The term ὁ ἰσχυρός is used frequently as a title for God in the LXX,<sup>93</sup> a datum that Francis Moloney interprets as indicating that the audience is encouraged to detect in John's use of the comparative form, ὁ ἰσχυρότερος, allusive language (in our terminology) for Yahweh.<sup>94</sup> While this comparative form is never used for God in the LXX, the lexical overlap is nevertheless striking, particularly when it is integrated into the surrounding context. It is God's Spirit that takes possession of the Markan Jesus in 1:10,<sup>95</sup> which provides further evidence that Mark's Jesus, the Messiah (1:1), Son of God (1:1), Lord (1:3), enjoys a *synkristic* relationship with Yahweh.<sup>96</sup> To this evidence, we add the probability that the Markan language of proclamation (ἐκήρυσσαν) of the coming one (ἔρχεται), who is the Mightier One (ὁ ἰσχυρότερος) into whom the Spirit descends (1:8, 10) would activate the Isaianic schemas and scripts from (or associated with) the composite testimony in 1:2–3, which associated Mark's Jesus with Yahweh through *emphasis* via κύριος.

91 Ethical virtue and the actions resulting from those virtues were often viewed as inseparable (cf. Theon, *Prog.* 110–111).

92 The verb ἔρχεται may activate Mal 3:1 LXX, where it refers to the coming κύριος and to his messenger.

93 Cf. Deut 10:17; Judg 6:12; 2 Sam 2:32–33, 48; Jer 27:24; 32:18; Dan 9:4; Neh 1:15; 9:31–32; 2 Sam 22:31; 23:5; Ps 7:17.

94 Moloney (*Mark*, 35) writes, “The use of κύριος and ἰσχυρότερος even suggest to the reader that claims made only for the God of Israel—Lord and Mighty One—are being shifted to the one who is to come.” Cf. Ernst Lohmeyer, *Das Evangelium des Markus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1937), 18 n. 1.

95 See further below.

96 Similarly, Moloney, *Mark*, 34.

The picture emerging with the activation of the composite citation is one of the coming Lord, who is described later in the Isaianic tradition as the κύριος who comes with strength (ἰδοὺ κύριος μετὰ ἰσχύος ἔρχεται) in Isa 40:10 LXX. Of course, audience members need not specifically connect Isa 40:10 with the Markan Jesus at this point since Yahweh's coming as the Mighty One is firmly established in the LXX. We are thus on solid ground in thinking that perceptive members of the audience familiar with the Jewish literature and tradition may infer that the Markan Jesus is again being described with language reserved for the God of Israel. In this case, Isa 40:10 LXX has been condensed into something of a nickname for the Markan Jesus,<sup>97</sup> a nickname that subtly plays off of both the Isaianic images already present in the prologue (1:2–3) in a way that works synergistically with the more direct comparison between the Markan Jesus and John. In other words, ἰδοὺ κύριος μετὰ ἰσχύος ἔρχεται (Isa 40:10 LXX) has become ἔρχεται ὁ ἰσχυρότερός μου ὀπίσω μου (Mark 1:7). The result is a subtle integration of the Gospel's latent *synkristic* relationship between Mark's Jesus and God within the proclamation of John via *emphasis*. While the nature of this relationship remains unclear for the audience, the hints toward assimilation continue.

Focant objects to divine connotations for ὁ ἰσχυρότερος, arguing that they are more readily found implied in the Matthean and Lukan versions of the episode than in Mark's.<sup>98</sup> However, while Matt 3:8–12 and Luke 3:15–17 are certainly more explicit, this only strengthens the argument for the same in Mark 1:8. Matthew and Luke seem to have read Mark 1:8 in a similar fashion in that they clarify the Markan ambiguity by using Mark's version of the episode and extending it.

Others have eschewed divine connotations by suggesting that ὁ ἰσχυρότερος falls short of connecting Mark's Jesus with the God of Israel. For example, John Meier understands ὁ ἰσχυρότερος as connecting Jesus ambiguously to an imminent eschatological figure (though not to Yahweh).<sup>99</sup> A more mundane reading has been adopted by Edwin Broadhead, who takes ὁ ἰσχυρότερος to refer to the relative powers of Jesus and John.<sup>100</sup> For Broadhead, this indicates that

97 Drawing on nicknames in the process of offering an encomium was a hallmark of good practice in the first-century world (Theon, *Prog.* 111).

98 Camille Focant, *The Gospel According to Mark: A Commentary*, trans. Leslie R. Keylock (Eugene, Ore.: Pickwick, 2012), 37.

99 John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*, 4 vols. (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 2:32–42. Similarly, Marcus, *Mark* 1–8, 157–58. Cf. Focant, *Mark*, 37.

100 Broadhead, *Naming Jesus*, 61–62.

Jesus is the “last and greatest of God’s messengers.”<sup>101</sup> However, this rendering neglects the Isaianic undertones present in Mark 1:7–8, which activates scripts for Yahweh, rather than a lesser eschatological figure. And, as we have already seen, the comparison between John and the Markan Jesus is present in John’s proclamation. While it is certainly correct that the Markan Jesus, as God’s son, is the last and greatest of his messengers (cf. 12:1–12), this fact by no means excludes a deeper, more profound, meaning. Indeed, hints to greater profundity are exactly what we should expect with *emphasis*.

Both senses—ὁ ἰσχυρότερος as an echo of God as the ὁ ἰσχυρός and as a measure of the relative “power” of Jesus and John—work very well together in the Markan context to argue strongly for the use of *emphasis* through ambiguity facilitated through the use of what Theon terms a nickname (ὁ ἐπωνύμιος).<sup>102</sup> In other words, Mark 1:7 activates the *synkristic* relationship with Yahweh in the context of allusive language comparing the Markan Jesus and John. Rather than applying wooden restrictions to the language of Mark 1:7–8, we are better served to embrace the flexibility and polysemy inherent in John’s speech, especially at this early stage. To do so is by no means to remain noncommittal, but is rather to insist on hearing Mark’s Gospel in its rhetorical context, a context that embraced polysemy and used it for rhetorical advantage. In this case, the use of the ambiguous nickname, ὁ ἰσχυρότερος, enables the narrative to cleverly sow the seeds for the characterization of Mark’s Jesus, by subtly hinting that he will be a new type of Davidic messiah, whose sonship is *kyriotic*, owing to *emphasis* and allusive language that encourages assimilation to Yahweh.

If the evangelist uses titles reserved for God to invite, however subtly, audience inference about the connection between Mark’s Jesus and God, actions likewise hint at the assimilation. At issue is the meaning of the line that the Mightier One will baptize “with the Holy Spirit” (ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ [1:8]). Marcus rightly urges that the phrase anticipates the exorcistic ministry of the Markan Jesus as he routs the forces of the Adversary.<sup>103</sup> Those familiar with the Markan narrative as a whole will be particularly likely to detect such foreshadowing (cf. 1:21–28; 3:22–24; 5:1–20; 9:28), but at this early stage, any exorcistic insinuations remain relatively muted. In addition, those in the audience familiar with prominent patterns in Jewish literature may be expected to know that it was

101 Broadhead, *Naming Jesus*, 62.

102 Theon, *Prog.* 111.

103 Similarly, Marcus, *Mark 1–8*, 157–58.

God himself who would pour forth his Spirit upon his people,<sup>104</sup> marking the beginning of the eschatological age.<sup>105</sup> These hearers now listen as this authority is bestowed upon the Markan Jesus as the Mightier One (1:7–8). Those who pick up on these subtle hints will be encouraged to continue to infer a strong association between the two figures, an association that will grow into assimilation as the narrative progresses.<sup>106</sup>

Rhetorically, John's praise of the coming Mightier One's baptism with the Holy Spirit falls under the category of fine actions done for others, which were themselves linked to ethical virtues, or goods of the mind.<sup>107</sup> In this case, just as John's baptism and preaching of repentance were done on behalf of others, so also was the greater baptism of this coming one. The fact that the baptism would be in the Holy Spirit only heightens the magnanimity of the action itself, and the result is greater praise and honor lavished on the coming one for his generous benefactions. When the generosity of the action itself is combined with the divine connotations inherent in associating the giving of the Holy Spirit with this coming one, the result is similar to the use of *emphasis* with κύριος in 1:3 (cf. 1:1): there are hints that the coming one, whom the narrative will immediately identify as the Markan Jesus (1:9) will act with power and authority associated with God in Jewish tradition as reflected in the LXX, DSS, and Pseudepigrapha.<sup>108</sup>

Thus allusive language features prominently both in the narrator's description of John in 1:4–6 and in John's testimony concerning the Markan Jesus in 1:7–8. The former utilizes the deeds and appearance of Elijah, a greatly respected and revered figure in Second Temple Judaism, to enhance the status of John within Mark's narrative. The latter focuses on the deeds of and even a title used only for—the God of Israel to continue to encourage the audience to fill out the portrait of Mark's Jesus towards assimilation to Yahweh. Until this point, only Yahweh, the Mighty One, dispensed the Holy Spirit, but the audience is now encouraged to infer that this power belongs to the Markan Jesus. To be sure, the comparison is subtle, but we have already seen that subtlety strengthens an argument's persuasive power. Through delicate and less than

104 E.g., Isa 44:3 LXX; Ezek 39:29 LXX; Joel 2:28–32 LXX; cf. 1QS III, 7–9; IV, 18–23; 1QH XVI, 11–12; *T. Levi* 18:6–7.

105 Hooker, *Mark*, 38–39; Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*, 2:53–56.

106 See Ps-Hermogenes 19–20, which cites the comparison of Odysseus and Heracles as such an instance where the lesser is compared to the greater for the benefit of the lesser (Odysseus); see further on allusion in Chapter Two above.

107 Theon, *Prog.* 110.

108 Cf. Mark 2:1–12; 4:35–41; 6:30–44; 6:45–52; 12:35–37.

overt means, John's testimony carries the audience along toward the eventual characterization of Mark's Jesus as the *kyriotic* Son. This is the characterization, which is embedded and elaborated upon with increasing clarity in the remainder of the story.<sup>109</sup>

### Baptism and Divine Testimony (1:9–11)

We now come to the climactic event in the prologue: the baptism of the Markan Jesus with its accompanying host of divine testimony confirming his *kyriotic* sonship.

#### *The Baptism of the Markan Jesus (1:9)*

While John's testimony did not explicitly identify the Markan Jesus as the coming one, the audience has been given hints—through testimony from the narrator, “Isaiah,” and John, as well as through *emphasis*—underscoring the Davidic and divine *synkristic* relationships enjoyed by Mark's Jesus. Neither the details nor the implications of these relationships have been revealed, save for those in the audience particularly attuned to Jewish scripts and schemas, who may, even at this early stage, believe that the Markan Jesus is a divine, royal Davidic messiah (1:1). Now they watch as this mysterious figure comes from Nazareth to participate in John's baptism of repentance (1:4–5).

Given the audience-elevating perspective earlier in the prologue (1:1–8), the mundane entrance of the Markan Jesus into the story is striking. The audience's first direct experience with Jesus is one in which he is obedient to God's reign, by participating in an act symbolic of repentance from sins. Further, a temporal marker (ἐν ἐκεῖναις ταῖς ἡμέραις) introduces the Markan Jesus in a manner that would signal the eschatological nature of his “coming” (ἦλθεν<sup>110</sup>) from Nazareth for those audience members who are acquainted with scripts associated with God's eschatological activity derived from the LXX.<sup>111</sup> However,

109 Cf., e.g., 10:46–52; 11:1–11; 12:35–37; 14:1–16:8.

110 Given the speed and temporal flow of the narrative, it is unclear whether many in the audience would hear echoes of 1:7: ἔρχεται ὁ ἰσχυρότερός μου ὀπίσω μου in the narrator's introduction of the Markan Jesus in 1:9: καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν ἐκεῖναις ταῖς ἡμέραις ἦλθεν Ἰησοῦς ἀπὸ Ναζαρέτ τῆς Γαλιλαίας.

111 See Mark 8:1; 13:17, 19, 24. While more subtle than the other occurrences, in Mark 8:1 the phrase cues audience members to the eschatological significance of the second feeding via *emphasis*. See further, e.g., Jer 31:33 LXX; Joel 3:2 LXX; 4:1; Zech 8:23 LXX; cf. Pss. Sol. 17:44; 18:6. Similarly, e.g., Moloney, *Mark*, 36; Marcus, *Mark* 1–8, 163.



for most in the audience, the oral/aural experience of the Markan Jesus's baptism moves so quickly that, before there is much time to consider why he is being baptized, the heavens are torn open in divine testimony (1:10). Only the most perceptive among those in the audience—those who have already settled in their minds that the Markan Jesus is the coming Spirit-baptizing *ὁ ἰσχυρότερός*—will realize the profound irony of baptizing with water the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit (cf. 1:7–8).<sup>112</sup>

For those who detect it, this irony may create dissonance as audience members struggle to understand how the one who will wield the Spirit would need water baptism.<sup>113</sup> No satisfaction will be achieved, however, because the narrative offers no explicit reason.<sup>114</sup> This silence creates a gap in the narrative that scholars have found difficult to resist filling. For example, John Paul Heil argues that the Markan Jesus comes “in solidarity with the people's situation of sinfulness and conversion in expectation of a new and decisive saving intervention by God,”<sup>115</sup> whereas Bas van Iersel suggests that the Markan Jesus comes to John's baptism for the same reason as the masses from Judaea and Jerusalem: “to make a new beginning.”<sup>116</sup> Lastly, Mary Ann Beavis suggests that the inclusion of a baptism next to testimony that the baptized is God's Son is a vestige of (in Dunn's terminology), “Christology in the making.”<sup>117</sup>

While Heil's reasoning fits with that of the Matthean version of the story (Matt 3:13–17), it goes beyond the scene in Mark. Similarly, van Iersel's reasoning is plausible, but there is nothing within the narrative to confirm or deny that the Markan Jesus is after a new start. Finally, while it is not impossible that the baptism is a vestige of nascent reflection upon Jesus, it is not by any means clear that this must be the case. Moreover, that the Markan Jesus joins John for baptism is not problematic from the perspective of the narrative since he has yet to be possessed by the Spirit (cf. 1:10). Indeed, it is his

112 Similarly, Bas M. F. van Iersel, *Mark: A Reader-Response Commentary*, LNTS 164 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 98.

113 Indeed, this is a tension that later evangelists will seek to resolve in a variety of ways. See Matt 3:14–15; Luke 3:21; cf. John 1:29–34. Interestingly, Luke 3:21 preserves the irony to some degree, even if it is muted there: like “all the people,” Jesus was baptized.

114 Focant, *Mark*, 41.

115 John Paul Heil, *The Gospel of Mark as Model for Action: A Reader-Response Commentary* (New York: Paulist, 1992), 34–35.

116 van Iersel, *Mark*, 99.

117 Beavis, *Mark*, 41. Cf. James D. G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996).

*Spirit* baptism that facilitate his own acquisition of the Spirit and subsequent numinous ministry.<sup>118</sup>

At a fundamental level, the Markan Jesus's response to the message of John indicates for the audience that this Jesus is a righteous man, who is aligning himself with John's actions, plans, and goals.<sup>119</sup> This may lead to further association between John and the Markan Jesus such that the audience might infer that the two figures share "a joint project in order to realize the plans and goals that were indicated by Mark 1:3."<sup>120</sup> This would be the case especially if the Markan Jesus's joining John in 1:9 activates 1:3 and in turn the *synkristic* relationship with Yahweh, whose coming the Isaianic voice foretold.

### *Divine Testimony at the Baptism (1:10–11)*

The tripartite divine testimony offered in 1:10–11 activates the Davidic and divine *synkristic* relationships enjoyed by Mark's Jesus, subtly extending the audience members' knowledge of Mark's Jesus in a way that will help them better understand the characterization of *kyriotic* sonship as the narrative moves forward. However, as earlier in the prologue, very little is made explicit; instead, it is shrouded in allusive language that comes in the form of a confirming testimony from the God of Israel, the highest possible authority in the Markan world.

Literature in antiquity regularly incorporated divine testimony in a variety of forms. In Mark 1:10–11, we find a combination of three of these forms that work together as a seal of God's approval of the characterization arising from the testimonies of the narrator, "Isaiah," and John. Recall Cicero's discussion of the testimony of virtuous people: the authority of these witnesses comes from their hard work, whereas testimonies from the gods are upheld by their divine nature (*Top.* 20.76).<sup>121</sup> Cicero then lists different types of testimony from the gods:

118 See below for more on the descent of the Spirit *into* the Markan Jesus in 1:10 and its function for Markan narrative christology as a whole, including its manifestation in his power. As Moloney puts it, "It is as one gifted with the Spirit (v. 10) that Jesus will baptize with the Spirit (v. 8)" (36). Moloney, *Mark*, 36. See further the discussion on 1:23–27 below in Chapter Four.

119 Similarly, Hartvigsen, *Prepare*, 122. Cf. Hartmut Stegemann, *Die Essener, Qumran, Johannes der Täufer und Jesus* (Freiburg: Herder, 2007), 316–17.

120 Hartvigsen, *Prepare*, 122–23.

121 See further Chapter Two above.

First, the heavens themselves and all their order and beauty; secondly, the flight of birds through the air and their songs; thirdly, sounds and flashes of fire from the heavens, and portents given by many objects on earth, as well as the foreshadowing of events which is revealed by the entrails (of sacrificial animals). Many things also are revealed by visions seen in sleep. The testimony of the gods is at times adduced from these topics in order to win conviction.<sup>122</sup> (*Top.* 20.77 [Hubbell, LCL])

Cicero offers six categories of testimony: (1) the heavens themselves; (2) the flight of birds and their songs; (3) sounds and flashes of fire from the heavens; (4) earthly portents; (5) entrails of animals; (6) visions and dreams. While Cicero's handbook will have only been known directly by a limited few, these valued signs and portents were part of the warp and woof of first-century life, and thus we may expect audience members to esteem their authority.<sup>123</sup>

Mark 1:10–11 uses only 34 words, which can be performed in only a breath or two, in order to convey three related divine testimonies.<sup>124</sup> Only the Markan Jesus and the audience are privy to these three signs from the heavens, all of which are clear instances of divine testimony when viewed within the first-century rhetorical context. The first comes in the form of a portent when the heavens are torn apart (σχιζομένους τοὺς οὐρανοὺς) (1:10a). From the rent heavens descends another testimony via the flight of a bird, which is a corporeal representation of the Spirit that descends into the Markan Jesus (εἰς αὐτόν) (1:10b). The triple testimony reaches its crescendo in the form of a heavenly voice (1:11). The voice offers its seal of approval in a speech act that officially confirms both Mark's Jesus and the narrator's testimony about him in 1:1: σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱὸς μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν σοὶ εὐδόκησα (1:11).<sup>125</sup> In what follows, we will take each of these testimonies in turn, discussing their meaning and significance for the characterization of Mark's Jesus as the *kyriotic* Son.

122 primum ipse mundus eiusque omnis ordo et ornatus; deinceps aerii volatus avium atque cantus; deinde eiusdem aeris sonitus et ardores multarumque rerum in terra portenta atque etiam per exta inventa praesensio; a dormientibus quoque multa significata visis. Quibus ex locis sumi interdum solent ad fidem faciendam testimonia deorum.

123 On the prevalence of rhetorical conventions at the popular level of the rhetorical culture of the first-century Mediterranean world, see further Chapter Two above.

124 Based on my own aloud readings of the episode in Greek.

125 Similarly, Malbon writes, "Because God is the highest authority in Mark's narrative world, the voice from heaven (God) gives the narrator's assertion [in 1:1] a high measure of authority." See Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, *Mark's Jesus: Characterization as Narrative Christology* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2009), 77.

### Tearing the Heavens and the Descent of the Dove (1:10)

The notion of the heavens being opened is itself not uncommon, particularly in scenes of theophany, epiphany, and revelation.<sup>126</sup> However, the phrase “the heavens split” (σχιζόμενους τοὺς οὐρανοὺς) is quite unusual in that occurs neither in the LXX, nor elsewhere in the NT or other early Christian literature.<sup>127</sup> How might audience members have understood it?

The vivid, descriptive language of the tearing of the heavens is an unmistakably divine action, matching the first-century expectation that cataclysmic events in the heavens were signs from the gods.<sup>128</sup> For example, Cicero lists the rending of the heavens as one of the omens given to the Romans.<sup>129</sup> Likewise, as we shall see below, the rending of the heavens is also associated with an omen given to Turnus verifying the message he receives from the goddess Iris, whose journey to him is described using avian imagery (*Aen.* 9.18–22). The rending of the heavens is not only viewed as divine testimony within Roman culture, but also features in similar ways throughout both Jewish and Christian thought.<sup>130</sup>

In Mark 1:10a, the splitting of the heavens signals the permanent rending of the barrier between the divine and the human realms, from which the Spirit descends as a dove and the divine voice sounds approval.<sup>131</sup> The importance of the term σχιζόμενους is underscored by the first instance of the famous and dramatic, καὶ εὐθύς,<sup>132</sup> along with the fact that the only other time this term will be heard by audience members is when the lector reaches the death of Jesus, where the temple curtain is rent in two (15:38).<sup>133</sup> This initial testimony signals

126 Isa 63:19 LXX; Ezek 1:1 LXX; Hermas, *Vis.* 1.1.4; T. Levi 2:6; 18:6. Cf. 2 Bar. 22:1; Apoc. Abr. 19:4, for which no Greek versions survive.

127 We do find a similar phrase in *Joseph and Aseneth*, which portrays a time when the heaven was split (ἐσχίσθη ὁ οὐρανός) near the morning star. An angel then appeared, described as a great light that proved to be a “man,” who came down to Aseneth from heaven (*Jos. Asen.* 14:1–3). Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 148. Cf. Gideon Bohak, *Joseph and Aseneth and the Jewish Temple in Heliopolis*, SBLEJL 10 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 2–3; Angela Standhartinger, *Das Frauenbild im Judentum der hellenistischen Zeit: ein Beitrag anhand von “Joseph und Aseneth,”* AGJU 26 (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 108–25.

128 E.g., *Aen.* 9:20–22; Cic. *Div.* 1.43.97.

129 Cic. *Div.* 1.43.97, “et cum caelum discessisse visum esset.” Cf. Julius Obsequens, *Liber de prodigiis* 52: “caelum visum discedere.”

130 Beavis, *Mark*, 36.; e.g., Acts 7:56; 10:11; T. Levi 2:6; 5:1; 18:6; T. Jud. 24.2; 2 Bar. 22.1; cf. Rev. 4:1.

131 Donald Juel, *Mark* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1990), 33.

132 Cf. Mark 1:12, 18, 20, 21, 23, 29, 30, 42; 2:8, 12; 4:5; 5:29, 30, 42; 6:27, 45; 8:10; 9:15; 10:52; 11:2, 3; 14:43, 72; 15:1.

133 That this instance of divine testimony is also followed by a confession of Jesus's sonship (15:39) only strengthens the narrational connection between scenes of the Markan Jesus's baptism and his crucifixion (see further in Chapter Six below).

to the audience that this baptism is quite unlike their own. It also indicates that the ministry of the Markan Jesus is associated with the apocalyptic invasion of the heavenly realm into the earthly one.<sup>134</sup>

Once the heavens are torn apart, the Spirit descends as a dove into the Markan Jesus (εἰς αὐτόν).<sup>135</sup> The notion that the flight of a bird marked a testimony from the gods is well established by the first century (Cic. *Top.* 20.77); presumably the bird's/birds' presence symbolized the divine presence (and thus the testimony). However, the precise meaning attached by audience members to the descent of the dove in the Markan prologue is less established. In fact, Davies and Allison have outlined no less than sixteen interpretations in the scholarly record.<sup>136</sup> Discussions of the meaning of the Spirit's descent as a dove usually revolve around which texts from the LXX might inform this scene.

Kirsten Marie Hartvigsen is probably correct that, for audience members familiar with the relevant Jewish scripts, the notion of the heavens tearing open and the Spirit descending as a dove upon/into the Markan Jesus would likely "prime or activate cultural memory of the Spirit of the Lord coming upon leaders (Judg 3:10; 1 Kgdms 16:13), prophets (Mic 3:8; Neh 9:30), and ideal kings (Isa 11:2)."<sup>137</sup> Working toward greater specificity, Beavis has argued that Elisha's prophetic succession has influenced Mark 1:9–11 (cf. 2 Kgs 2:9–12, 15 LXX).<sup>138</sup> Yet the audience is likely to have expectations that would exceed those associated with Elijah-Elisha (despite the Elijah-John connection). Instead, the "Isaianic" testimony in Mark 1:2–3 would likely prepare at least some audience members to hear the baptismal scene against Isaianic imagery. For example, Adela Yarbro Collins and Peter Bolt have each argued convincingly that texts such as Isa 61:1–2 LXX are dramatically actualized before the audience in Mark 1:9–11.<sup>139</sup> As the Spirit of the Lord rests upon the prophet in Isa 61:1, so the Spirit descends on/into Jesus in Mark 1:9. Relatedly, scripts may be activated that derive from Isa 11:1–9 LXX (esp. v. 2, mentioned above), which associates the Spirit with the qualities of the ideal king, who springs forth

<sup>134</sup> Marcus, *Mark* 1–8, 165; Juel, *Mark*, 33.

<sup>135</sup> As Davies and Allison point out, the apocalyptic context of the scene is highlighted by the ὥς clause, which is commonly associated with apocalyptic episodes. Cf. LXX Ezek 1:4, 5, 7, 13, 16, 22, 24, 26–28; Dan 7:13. See W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison Jr., *Matthew*, 3 vols., ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988), 1:331–34. For a discussion of possible literary antecedents to the descent of the Spirit as a bird, see Dixon, "Descending Gods," 761–65.

<sup>136</sup> Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 1:331–34.

<sup>137</sup> Hartvigsen, *Prepare*, 123. Cf. Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 149.

<sup>138</sup> Beavis, *Mark*, 36.

<sup>139</sup> E.g., Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 149; Bolt, *Jesus' Defeat of Death*, 46.

from the root of Jesse.<sup>140</sup> Audience members who settle on this script for the anointing of an ideal Davidic king will have the *synkristic* relationship between Mark's Jesus and David primed since it would encourage the inference that the former is an ideal king in the line of the latter.

Alternatively, and perhaps less likely, the picture of the Spirit of God, soaring (as a dove)<sup>141</sup> over the baptismal waters and upon/into the Markan Jesus may activate images associated with Gen 1 LXX, where the Spirit of God is carried along over the water (πνεῦμα θεοῦ ἐπεφέρετο ἐπάνω τοῦ ὕδατος) (Gen 1:2 LXX).<sup>142</sup> Those for whom Gen 1 LXX is activated will likely also interpret the Markan Jesus's time in the wilderness "with the animals" in a similar fashion (see below on 1:12–13). For these audience members, the baptism of the Markan Jesus would suggest, "the eschatological creation had commenced."<sup>143</sup>

Other audience members will probably interpret the bird imagery in still another direction. A ubiquitous script in the Hellenistic world related to avian flight was the notion of the visitation of the gods. That is, gods or goddesses were routinely described as flying to earth in a bird-like manner. While there is no biblical antecedent for God coming to earth as a dove, it happens throughout Hellenistic literature, such as Homer's *Iliad* and Vergil's *Aeneid*.<sup>144</sup> Recalling our earlier discussion, the works of Homer, especially the *Iliad*, were essential reading in the Greco-Roman educational system.<sup>145</sup> Moreover, one need not have formal education to gain exposure to the myths that filled his works, since they were part of the fabric of the first-century Mediterranean world. Thus, given the prominence of Homer and Vergil in both education and in broader popular culture, we may expect such motifs to be primed or

140 For a thorough discussion of the issues involved and the points of contact between Isaiah 61:1–2 LXX and Mark 1:1–15, see Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 149.

141 The presentation of the Spirit of God as, ἐπεφέρετο ἐπάνω τοῦ ὕδατος in Gen 1:2 LXX is content addressable with the Spirit ὡς περιστερὰν καταβαίνον over the water in Mark 1:10. There is thus no need for verbatim agreement to facilitate activation.

142 Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 1.334; Moloney, *Mark*, 36. On the patristic interpretation of Jesus's baptism as the bringer of new creation, see Tertulian, *De bapt.* 1–4; Theodotus, *Excerpta* 7; Cyril of Jerusalem in PG 33.433A; Didymus the Blind in PG 39.692C.

143 Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 1.334. Cf. Tg. Ps-J on Gen 1.2, which presents the Spirit of God as the Spirit of the Messiah (see also Gen. Rab. 1.2). See also Dale C. Allison, "Behind the Temptations of Jesus: Q4:1–13 and Mark 1:12–13," in *Authenticating the Activities of Jesus*, ed. Bruce D. Chilton and Craig A. Evans (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 195–213.

144 Since I cannot, in this setting, offer a full survey of the use of avian imagery in the great literature of antiquity, I limit myself to two of its most pervasive and influential works.

145 See above on "Narrative Beginnings in Ancient Literary Theory" for further discussion of the use of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in Greco-Roman education.

activated for most audience members, even for those who do not ultimately settle on this script for making sense of the scene.<sup>146</sup>

Both the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid* have multiple scenes in which bird similes are used to describe both the arrival and departure of gods.<sup>147</sup> In Book 15, Apollo is sent by Zeus to aid Hector, and his descent is described with a bird simile: Apollo “went down from the hills of Ida, like a dove-slaying swift-footed falcon [ἵρηκι ἐοικώς ὡκέϊ φασσοφόνῳ], the swiftest of birds.” As a result, Hector was enlivened for the battle with renewed, divine energy. Similarly, in Book 18, Achilles loses his armor during the heart-wrenching death of his beloved Patroclus and his divine mother, Thetis, delivers him new armor crafted by Hephaestus himself on Mount Olympus. Her swift aid is likened to a falcon: “like [ὥς] a falcon she leapt down [ἄλτο] from snowy Olympus, bearing the flashing armor from Hephaestus” (*Il.* 18.616–617). While Thetis does encourage Achilles toward battle, his grief at the death of his beloved cousin crushes his appetite so that he grows weak due to his lack of sustenance. In response, Zeus once again intervenes and sends Athena to nourish him. Immediately, Athena, “like [ἐῦκυῖα] a bird of prey, wide-winged and shrill-voiced, leapt down [ἐκκατεπᾶλτο] from heaven through the air” (19.349–350). Her presence is kept concealed from everyone as she secretly puts sweet nectar and pleasant ambrosia into Achilles’s breast to sustain him during the arduous battle that lies ahead. Her mission now complete, she returns to Olympus undetected.

This motif is adopted by later writings in the epic tradition, such as Vergil’s *Aeneid*, which makes ample use of birds to symbolize the visitation of the gods.<sup>148</sup> On one occasion, the flight of birds is used to describe the descent of Mercury from the heavens to visit Aeneas and remind him of his mission since he has been distracted by his love for Dido. Mercury’s feet are fitted with golden shoes, which carry him through the air on wings (*Aen.* 4.238–241). On his journey, his flight pattern is likened to a bird: “with his whole frame he

146 Teresa Morgan, *Literate Education in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), passim (e.g., 50–89); MacDonald, *The Homeric Epics and the Gospel of Mark*, 1–8; Criore, *Gymnastics*, passim (e.g., 40–43); Hock, “Homer,” 56–77. By suggesting that schemas and scripts from Homer may impact audience reception of Mark’s Gospel, I do not also imply that the narrative is a *mimesis* of the Homeric epics. For a critique of this thesis in general (and MacDonald’s arguments in particular) see Kristian Larsson, “Intertextual Density, Quantifying Imitation,” *JBL* 133 (2014): 309–31.

147 The flights of birds often mark the arrivals and departures of gods in Homeric literature. See Carroll Moulton, *Similes in the Homeric Poems*, Hypomnemata 49 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977), 138.

148 See above on “Narrative Beginnings in Ancient Literary Theory” for a discussion of the influence of Vergil’s *Aeneid* in both Greco-Roman education and popular culture.



sped sheer down to the waves like a bird [*avi similes*], which round the shores, round the fish-haunted cliffs, flies low near to the waters" (4.252–258). At other times, Vergil combines divine testimonies, just as we see in Mark. For example, he describes the goddess Iris's flight with the language of bird flights, which is combined with the parting of the heavens.<sup>149</sup> Iris, "on poised wings rose into the sky, tracing in her flight a huge arch beneath the clouds. [...] "I [Turnus] see the heavens part asunder [*discedere*], and the stars that roam in the firmament. I follow the mighty omen, whoever you are who call me to arms" (*Aen.* 9.20–21 [Fairclough, LCL])!<sup>150</sup> In this instance, Turnus interprets the parting of the heavens as an omen that verifies the message from the goddess.

This brief sampling shows the ubiquity of the flight of birds as the arrival of a god or goddess in the first-century milieu of Mark's Gospel. We are therefore on solid ground in suggesting that the descent of the Spirit as a dove in Mark 1:10 would be similarly understood by the majority of those in the audience, who were at all familiar with the basic notion that gods sometimes visited earth in a bird-like manner. As we have already seen, the tearing of the sky in Mark 1:10 functions as a divine testimony and, as such, would contribute to the overall force of the tripartite testimony of the baptismal scene, which taken as a whole, serves as the testimony of the God of Israel that the characterization of the Markan Jesus in the prologue is trustworthy. Further, at the risk of pointing out the obvious, the Spirit is explicitly likened to a dove descending (ὡς περιστερὰν καταβαίνον) in Mark 1:10, leaving no doubt that the dove symbolizes a god. In sum, the descent of the Spirit described as the flight of a dove in Mark 1:10 fits the broad picture of the arrival of a god signaled by the descent of a bird from heaven to earth.<sup>151</sup>

One last piece of the divine testimony in the flight of the Spirit as a dove remains: what specifically is meant by the prepositional phrase εἰς αὐτόν? Scholars are divided over whether the audience would more likely understand εἰς αὐτόν to indicate that the Spirit was descending, "to," "into," or "upon" Jesus.<sup>152</sup> As Dixon has recently and convincingly argued, the evangelist does not use

149 Vergil uses *discedo* for the parting of the heavens in *Aen.* 9.20, which violently portrays parting of the clouds to reveal the stars. As such, it qualifies as a portent in the sky (Cic. *Top.* 77), which, within the first-century context, would be on par with the tearing of the heavens in Mark.

150 Medium video discedere caelumpalantisque polo stellas. Sequor omina tanta, quisquis in arma vocas.

151 So also Dixon, "Descending Gods," 759–80; Juel, *Mark*, 149. See further Leander E. Keck, "The Spirit and the Dove," *NTS* 17 (1970): 41–67.

152 For a thorough discussion of the scholarly opinions on this important prepositional phrase, see Dixon, "Descending Gods," 771 n. 41.

εἰς with a verb of motion elsewhere to denote movement toward a *personal* object;<sup>153</sup> rather, πρὸς is the preferred preposition for that sort of movement in Mark.<sup>154</sup> Further, of the 140 times that the evangelist uses εἰς, only twice can the meaning be indisputably taken as “upon,” and in neither case is a verb of motion used.<sup>155</sup> However, virtually every other time that the evangelist uses εἰς with a verb of motion and a *personal* object, most translators render it, “into.” The syntactical evidence itself is overwhelming and fits exceedingly well in the context of the Markan account,<sup>156</sup> as well as what we know of the different types of divine visitations in first-century Roman mythology.

As we have already seen, there is strong warrant for understanding the divine testimony of the descending dove/Spirit within the context of Hellenistic traditions of the arrival of a god from the heavenly realm to earth. Within these myths, gods typically either came to earth totally undetected or they disguised themselves by taking on human form.<sup>157</sup> Both categories have relevance for the Markan account. On the one hand, the Spirit’s descent is undetected by anyone except the Markan Jesus and the audience. But on the other hand, the Spirit enters into the Markan Jesus when he comes up from the waters of baptism. We have already seen evidence at length for the former category, in which the gods typically bestow strength and/or encouragement to the hero.<sup>158</sup> It is not at all difficult to imagine that members of the Markan audience familiar with these scripts would understand the dovelike Spirit as providing power and aptitude for his public ministry. However, the latter category (gods-in-disguise) also illuminates our understanding of the characterization of Mark’s Jesus. Typically, in this second category, gods take on a human form in order to conceal themselves for the completion of some task among mortals. For example,

153 The only occurrences of this construction occur with *impersonal* objects; e.g., Mark 1:14; 2:11; 3:13, 20; 4:35; 6:31; 7:24; 8:22; 9:33; 13:14.

154 E.g., Mark 1:5, 40, 45; 2:13; 3:8; 5:15; 6:51; 9:14.

155 Dixon, “Descending Gods,” 771–72 notes Mark 11:8 and 13:3.

156 We are thus in agreement with, e.g., Dixon, “Descending Gods,” 771–72; Boring, *Mark*, 43, 45; Robert H. Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993); James R. Edwards, “The Baptism of Jesus According to the Gospel of Mark,” *JETS* 34 (1991): 43–57; Ferdinand Hahn, *Titles of Jesus in Christology: Their History in Early Christianity*, trans. H. Knight and G. Ogg (London: Lutterworth, 1969), 293.

157 Jean Pierre Vernant, *Mortals and Immortals: Collected Essays*, ed. Froma I. Zeitlin (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 42–43.

158 At times this strengthening is even breathed into the divinely fortified hero, as when Athena breathes strength (ἐμπνευσε μένος) into Diomedes so that he is able to kill the Thracians with supernatural power and speed as they sleep outside the walls of Troy (*Il.* 10.482).

Poseidon (whose exit is likened to a hawk) takes on the form of Calchas when strengthening the two Ajaxes (*Il.* 13.62–65). Likewise, Athena takes the form of Mentos and, later on, Mentor, as she converses with Telemachus (*Il.* 1.320; 3:371.72). This second category has much to commend itself, particularly with reference to the secrecy motif surrounding Mark's Jesus.<sup>159</sup> When he reveals himself to a select group of disciples at his transfiguration on the high mountain, he is depicted as a divine being, not simply a human messianic figure (9:2–8).<sup>160</sup>

To recapitulate, many scripts may be evoked for audience members by the descent of the Spirit as a dove.<sup>161</sup> Some listeners may understand the bird imagery as divine testimony. Those listeners most saturated in Jewish schemas and scripts derived from the LXX will likely infer that this divine testimony attests to the Davidic kingship of Mark's Jesus, or else they may intuit that the Spirit has descended *into* him in order to provide aid for his ministry as an ideal Davidic king.<sup>162</sup> Otherwise, the thoroughgoing association of "bird similes" with the visitation of the gods also ensures that, simply by virtue of their participation in Roman society, many audience members will infer that Mark's Jesus is being characterized as either supernaturally strengthened by God, or even possessed by God—and thus is now something of a god-in-disguise.<sup>163</sup> Those opting for the latter will be confirmed at the transfiguration (cf. 9:2–8).

This characterization of Mark's Jesus as either an ideal Davidic king or a god-in-disguise activated by the descent of the Spirit as a dove will be carried forward by the rest of the baptism, depending on which script each audience member settles upon. Regardless of which script audience members (likely non-consciously<sup>164</sup>) opt for, the subsequent episodes will round out both sides of *kyriotic* sonship, which will receive increasingly forceful clarification through the rhetoric of inference as the narrative progresses. This rhetorical strategy reflects what seems to be hope of slowly and steadily winning audience members over to this particular characterization of Mark's Jesus.<sup>165</sup>

159 Dixon, "Descending Gods," 772–75.

160 See on 9:2–13 in Chapter Four below.

161 Even some of the examples treated above show a blending of categories (e.g., clandestine visitation for the purpose of divine strengthening). See above on *Il.* 13.62–65; 19.349–350.

162 So also Malbon, *Mark's Jesus*, 154.

163 Again, see above on *Il.* 13.62–65; 19.349–350.

164 See above in Chapter Two.

165 See further on "To What Ends the Rhetoric of Inference" in Chapter Seven below.

## The Divine Voice from Heaven (1:11)

Voices and sounds from the heavens are an integral, though less common, part of communication from the divine, often offering advice or encouragement,<sup>166</sup> marking divine judgment for or against an idea or event,<sup>167</sup> or providing foreshadowing<sup>168</sup> in the form of an omen. In Mark 1:11, a heavenly voice signals divine approval of the Markan characterization of Jesus thus far in the prologue.<sup>169</sup> By declaring *this* Jesus as “son,” the divine voice implicitly confirms the characterization thus far, as hinted at by the narrator (1:1), “Isaiah” (1:2–3), and John (1:7–8).

The voice is comprised of a conflation of texts from the LXX: σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν σοὶ εὐδόκησα. It is exceedingly difficult to isolate the specific source(s) of the scriptural allusion in these words with much certainty, but combinations of Ps 2:7, Isa 42:1, and, sometimes, Gen 22:2<sup>170</sup> LXX are typically

166 E.g., Dionysius of Halicarnassus recounts encouragement given to the Romans from the gods in the voice of an audible voice, received at their lowest point in a battle with the Tyrrhenians: “the voice of the divinity encouraged the Romans that they be of good courage, as having conquered, and proclaimed that the enemy’s dead exceeded theirs by one man” (ἡ δὲ τοῦ δαιμονίου φωνὴ θαρρεῖν παρεκελεύετο τοῖς Ῥωμαίοις ὥς νενικηκόσιν, ἐνὶ πλείους εἶναι τοὺς τῶν πολεμίων ἀποφαίνουσα νεκρούς) (*Ant. Rom.* 5.16.3).

167 E.g., Josephus relates as one of the seven portents, which he associates with the fall of Jerusalem, a divine voice announcing the departure of the divine presence in the temple during the feast of Pentecost: “the priests . . . reported that they said that, first, there was quaking and a loud crash, and after this, a voice as of a host [φωνῆς ἀθρόας], ‘We are departing from here.’” (*B.J.* 6.5.3 §§299–300). The placement of the voice within a cluster of omens, the physical context of the voice (in the inner parts of the temple), and the description of the voice as ἀθρόας all but make certain that the unnamed voice is that of God. So also James R. McConnell Jr., *The Topos of Divine Testimony in Luke-Acts* (Eugene, Ore: Wipf & Stock, 2014), 87.

168 E.g., Livy relates that Camillus references a voice that Marcus Caedicius heard, which was “more distinct than a person’s,” telling him to inform the magistrates that the Gauls were approaching (*Hist.* 5.32.6). The Gauls did not heed the warning, and so the divine voice became a prophecy of impending peril. This voice was later evoked in a deliberative setting as divine testimony to the religious scruples that Camillus possessed (*Hist.* 5.49.8–50.5). For a discussion of the divine testimony through birds in Luke-Acts, see McConnell, *The Topos of Divine Testimony in Luke-Acts*, 232–34. Cf. Jerzy Linderski, “Roman Religion in Livy,” in *Livius. Aspekte seines Werkes*, ed. Wolfgang Schuller (Xenia: Konstanz, 1993), 53–70, esp. 55.

169 While the voice in 1:11 (and in 9:7) bears some similarities to the rabbinic tradition of the *bat qol*, as the name itself suggests (“the daughter of a voice”) these instances are never unmediated like the one encountered in 1:11 (Marcus, *Mark* 1–8, 160).

170 Matthew S. Rindge, “Reconfiguring the Akedah and Recasting God: Lament and Divine Abandonment in Mark,” *JBL* 130 (2011): 762–64; Pesch, *Markusevangelium*, 1:93. For Ps 2:7

adduced as likely scriptural subtexts. However, for those familiar with Jewish cultural memory, scripts associated with the installation of God's anointed Davidic king may be activated.<sup>171</sup> Indeed, the first part of the divine testimony functions as something of an actualization of Ps 2:7 LXX;<sup>172</sup> the Markan Jesus is made "son" by the proclamation of the voice. While the original context of Ps 2:7 LXX may or may not connote adoption,<sup>173</sup> "the language evoked ideas of adoption in at least some of the early social contexts in which Mark was read and heard."<sup>174</sup> Such activation would bolster the ties already formed with David and be strengthened by those to come. Arguably, audience members interpreting Mark 1:11 on the basis of Ps 2:7 LXX (or related scripts) will already hear Davidic connotations in the divine sonship made explicit in σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός (1:11b).

If scripts associated with Gen 22:2 LXX were activated for the audience, so too would traditions associated with Isaac and the Akedah. In favor of a connection to Gen 22:2 LXX, Matthew Rindge notes the similar phrasing (σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός // τὸν υἱόν σου τὸν ἀγαπητόν); the use of ἀγαπητός, a vital term in the Akedah (Gen 22:2, 12, 16); other potential allusions to the Akedah in the surrounding context;<sup>175</sup> and, finally, other allusions to Gen 22:2

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and Gen 22:2, see Moloney, *Mark*, 37. Some find all three, Ps 2:7, Isa 42:1, Gen 22:2, playing a role in the divine voice; see Beavis, *Mark*, 36; Malbon, *Mark's Jesus*, 77; Marcus, *Mark* 1–8, 162–63, 165–66; Matera, "Prologue," 18 n. 31. Matera writes that the resulting portrait is one in which, "Jesus is the royal Son of God who comes as the Lord's Servant to surrender his life" (18 n. 31). In addition, Marcus notes that there may also be an echo of Genesis 1, pointing to the theme of "the good-pleasure of God, his delight in his creation, [and] his life-giving conviction that 'it is very good.'" See his, *The Way of the Lord: Christological Exegesis of the Old Testament in the Gospel of Mark* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992), 75. On the activation of Gen 1 in Mark 1:9–11, see above on 1:10.

171 Similarly, Hartvigsen, *Prepare*, 124.

172 So also Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 150.

173 For a positive ruling, see Mitchell J. Dahood, *Psalms*, AB (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 11–12, whereas John J. Collins (*King and Messiah as Son*, 11–22) demurs.

174 Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 150. Peppard (*Son of God*, 31–85) has argued forcefully that Mark 1:9–11 would be understood by Roman audience members in keeping with Roman adoption practices. Thus, even aside from Jewish scripts, Jesus's baptism will likely cue many audience members to think of Jesus as a divinely adopted son.

175 Rindge points to the use of πειραζόμενος in Mark 1:13 and Gen 22:1 LXX (ἐπείραζεν) where both Jesus and Abraham are "tested," along with the use of σχίζω, which is used for the splitting of the heavens in Mark 1:10 and the splitting of the wood in the Akedah (Gen 22:3 LXX). See Rindge, "Reconfiguring the Akedah," 763. While these keywords are added hooks between Mark and Genesis, one wonders if the inconsistency within the image

LXX found elsewhere in Mark foreshadowing Jesus's death (9:2, 7; 12:6).<sup>176</sup> The result would be that Jesus's baptism would hint at his coming suffering.<sup>177</sup> Importantly, the Gospel of Mark also refers to Jesus's death as his "baptism" in 10:38–40.<sup>178</sup> For alert members of the audience, this reference near the mid-point of the Gospel might revive the hints about Jesus's suffering sowed in his baptism and confirmed by Jesus's own prophecies to his coming suffering (8:31; 9:31; 10:34). Further support for this notion lies in the other connections between the death of Jesus and his baptism: both scenes are connected by the use of *σχιζω* (1:10; 15:38), the instances of divine testimony (1:10–11; 15:33, 38, 39<sup>179</sup>), and the testimonies that Mark's Jesus is "Son of God" (1:11; 15:39).

Lastly, if scripts associated with Isa 42:1 LXX were activated for the audience, images of Yahweh's choice—and subsequent anointing—of the Isaianic servant might be evoked.<sup>180</sup> Understood in this context, Mark 1:10 would reflect a Hellenization of the Jewish idea of anointing with the Spirit.<sup>181</sup> The activation of Isa 42:1 LXX, along with Ps 2:7 LXX, may prompt the audience to infer a distinctly royal and prophetic tint for the characterization of the Markan Jesus as "son,"<sup>182</sup> which we have already seen should be understood primarily in Davidic terms.

While each of these scripts may find proponents in the audience, the details remain obscured in what amount only to hints at this point in the narrative. Those who infer a royal/prophetic role for Mark's Jesus at this early stage will be rewarded later in the narrative, since, as I will argue in Chapters Four and

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evoked (the Markan Jesus is both Isaac and the one tested as Abraham?) would obscure the connection in the minds of those in the Markan audience.

176 Rindge, "Reconfiguring the Akedah," 763.

177 Malbon, *Mark's Jesus*, 78.

178 Similarly, Malbon, *Mark's Jesus*, 108.

179 On the testimony of the centurion as inspired speech, see Chapter Six below.

180 While the MT reads "my soul takes delight (in him)" (רצתה נפשי), the LXX reads "my soul receives him" (προσεδέξατο αὐτόν ἡ ψυχή μου). *Contra* Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 150. However, that audience members would be able to shift language registers to hear an allusion stretches the findings of cognitive science concerning hearing a performance past their breaking point.

181 For example, Isa 42:1c has the Spirit placed upon the Servant (ἐπ' αὐτόν), whereas Mark 1:10 has the Spirit descend *into* Jesus (εἰς αὐτόν). On the notion of Markan accommodation through the Hellenization of Jewish concepts, see Candida R. Moss, "The Transfiguration: An Exercise in Markan Accommodation," *BiblInt* 12 (2004): 69–89.

182 So also Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 150–51. Although, Yarbro Collins joins the royal connotations with military ones and sets the prophetic elements introduced by Isa 42:1 over against them. However, as I will demonstrate below, while the Markan Jesus is certainly cast in royal terms, they are not (traditionally) political ones.

Five, the Markan conception of Davidic messiahship adopts both royal and therapeutic contours, while eschewing the political connotations sometimes associated with the Davidic ideal king. At this point, however, given the continuous temporal flow of the performance, it is doubtful that many—if *any*—audience members will be able to distinguish the different texts or focus on the individual scripts involved with the accuracy requisite for much benefit.<sup>183</sup>

Instead, the broad scripts associated with the installation of God's chosen king would be most likely to be activated for audience members particularly familiar with Jewish cultural memory. If only broad scripts and schemas are activated—which the cognitive research adduced in Chapter Two would suggest—these audience members will most likely interpret the subsequent characterization of Mark's Jesus on the basis of scripts appropriate for God's ideal (and thoroughly Davidic) king.<sup>184</sup> The rest of the audience will simply hear: σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱὸς μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν σοὶ εὐδόκησα, without time to detect or evaluate the allusive language. In this case, Jesus is cast as the divinely adopted son of God, at least from the moment of his baptism onward. He will either leave the waters of baptism as a Davidic king or the divine son of God. Further reflection as the narrative unfolds will encourage hearers to think of these categories as complementary.

### *Summary of Characterization at the Baptism*

The divine voice offers testimony to the veracity of the Markan Jesus's sonship and is of crucial importance for his narrative characterization.<sup>185</sup> Together with the rent heavens and the flight of the dove-like Spirit, this tripartite divine testimony hints that Mark's Jesus will be cast as a Davidic messiah or ideal king for some, and as a god-in-disguise for others. While nothing has been overt, the hints continue to suggest that the characterization of Mark's Jesus will be shaped as much by his filial relation to the God of Israel, whose Spirit possesses him, as by his relation to David as the promised heir to the throne.

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183 Though his approach is different, Peppard (*Son of God*, 96) comes to similar conclusions: "on the whole, the allusions to Ps 2 and Isa 42 are not as unshakable as commentators make them out to be, and the connotations of those biblical texts are not always spelled out in full."

184 For similar comments on the import of these scripts for subsequent characterization, see Hartvigsen, *Prepare*, 124.

185 This importance is further underscored by the parallel testimonies to the sonship of the Markan Jesus at his transfiguration (9:7) and at his death (15:39). Since these passages will be treated at great length below, I will refrain from further discussion at this point.



The testimonies offered thus far on behalf of Jesus by the narrator (1:1), “Isaiah” (1:2–3), and John (1:7–8) confirm both the Davidic (1:1) and divine (1:2–3; 1:7–8) aspects of the characterization of Mark’s Jesus, depending on which scripts are settled upon by the audience members.<sup>186</sup> Further, and the divine testimonies at the baptism place God’s seal of approval on these prior testimonies and the resulting narrative portrait. In the pages and chapters that follow, we shall see that this characterization is developed and further explicated as the narrative progresses until it is fully confirmed for the audience by its dramatic demonstration in the passion and resurrection.

### The Markan Jesus in the Wilderness (Mark 1:12–13)

Further evidence that the Spirit takes possession of the Markan Jesus in 1:10, is found in the control it exerts over him in 1:12 by forcing him into the wilderness (ἐκβάλλει εἰς τὴν ἔρημον) for forty days of testing by the Adversary (ἦν ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ τεσσαράκοντα ἡμέρας πειραζόμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ σατανᾶ). The audience is told that, while in the wilderness, the Markan Jesus was “with wild animals” (ἦν μετὰ τῶν θηρίων) and that “the angels waited on him” (οἱ ἄγγελοι διηκόνουν αὐτῷ) (1:13). These verses are laconic, a feature we have come to expect in the prologue; indeed, the entirety of Mark 1:12–13 takes approximately less than 10 seconds in performance.<sup>187</sup> In such a short period of time, audience members may have any of at least four important Jewish scripts activated: the forty-day sojourn in the wilderness, testing by the Adversary, presence of wild animals, and service of angels.

Figures important in Israel’s history, including Moses and Elijah, were associated with forty-day sojourns.<sup>188</sup> And, of course, Israel herself spent forty years sojourning in the wilderness.<sup>189</sup> Moreover, as Marcus has pointed out, the motif of forty days also appears in Jewish reflection on Adam and Eve’s experience of testing by the serpent,<sup>190</sup> which was later associated with the

186 Importantly, the audience is encouraged to hold both dimensions of *kyriotic* sonship in tension within prologue; the presence of Χριστός (1:1) and κύριος (1:3) ensure that both *synkristic* relationships are formed in this narrative’s beginning.

187 Based on my own performative readings of the episode in Greek.

188 Moses (Exod 24:18; 34:28 LXX); Elijah, who was also the recipient of food from angels (1 Kgs 17:5–6; 19:5–8 LXX).

189 Num 14:33–34 LXX; Deut 8:2 LXX; Neh 9:21 LXX.

190 Marcus, *Mark* 1–8, 169. Cf. LAE 6.

Adversary.<sup>191</sup> Any of these schemas or scripts could be activated by allusive language of “forty days” for audience members familiar with Jewish tradition. However, more determinative for the characterization of Mark’s Jesus is one’s understanding of the function of the presence of the wild animals.

Considerable discussion revolves around the meaning assigned to the ambiguous phrase, “he was with wild animals” (ἦν μετὰ τῶν θηρίων) (1:13). Ernst Lohmeyer and others have understood the reference to wild animals as allies of the Adversary, demonic beings who have joined in the fight against the Markan Jesus.<sup>192</sup> While the outcome of the implied conflict is not made explicit, audience members already familiar with the Markan account, or other Jesus traditions, may recall that Jesus (and his disciples) were believed to have exorcistic powers.<sup>193</sup>

Indeed, it will not be long until the Markan Jesus is casting out demons and unclean spirits in a manner that encourages the priming, if not activating, of scripts associated with David and his son, Solomon, even as the Markan narrative encourages audience members to infer that “something greater than

191 Cf., e.g., Apoc. Mos. 17.4.

192 Lohmeyer, *Das Evangelium des Markus*, 27–28; Hooker, *Mark*, 50–51; France, *Mark*, 86–87; Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 151–52. In favor of this view, one finds support throughout Jewish literary traditions for the connection between wild animals and danger (cf. Isa 13:21–22 LXX; Ps 22:12–21 LXX), Israel’s enemies (Ezek 34:5–8 LXX; Dan 7:1–8 LXX), and demonic forces (T. Isaac 7.7), which were thought to live in the wilderness (e.g., Deut 32:17; Isa 34:14 LXX). Moreover, Mark 1:12–13 may allude to Ps 91, in which angels similarly care for God’s anointed, who finds himself in the midst of dangerous trials and depending on God’s angels for protection against wild animals, which were associated with demonic forces in the reception of Ps 91 at Qumran. In 11QApPs<sup>a</sup> (11Q11), several apocryphal psalms were used for exorcism, followed by a recension of Ps 91 (cf. T. Naph. 8.4). Column 2 strongly associates Solomon with exorcism of what seems to be a list of different types of demons (e.g., “spirits of the angels of destruction,” “spirits of the bastards” [understood to be the spirits of the Giants, the dead offspring of the Watchers], “demons,” “Lilith,” “howlers,” and “yelpers”). Moreover, David’s son, Solomon is regularly characterized as an exorcist in the Jewish literature of, and surrounding, the first century. The association of Ps 91 with apocryphal psalms that were used for exorcism suggests the psalm was already leveraged for exorcistic purposes in the Herodian period if not earlier. So, if Ps 91 were activated for those in the audience, they would likely understand the wild animals as demonic forces, which would fit well within Jewish traditions in use in the first century CE. Indeed, it seems like this is how Matthew and Luke understood Mark 1:12–13 since they have Jesus citing from Ps 91 in response to his testing, which they also make explicit (cf. Matt 4:5–6; Luke 4:9–11). See further Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 151–52; Hartvigsen, *Prepare*, 125.

193 E.g., Mark 1:34; 3:15; 6:13; 10:46–52.

Solomon is here.”<sup>194</sup> To be sure, there are a number of incongruities between the Markan narrative and those literary texts that describe Solomon as an exorcist. For example, as Lidija Novakovic notes in another context, there is no use of a seal ring, reference to Solomon’s name, direct confrontation with a demon as we see in the Testament of Solomon, or the revelation of secret methods for exorcism.<sup>195</sup>

However, it must be kept in mind that this study is interested in the influence of cultural scripts and schemas on audience construals of the Markan narrative. For this reason, we have a greater degree of latitude than if we were concerned with the direct influence of specific texts or authorial intent. That Solomon was remembered in Israel’s past as not just an exorcist, but as *the* exorcist par excellence, will be enough for some audience members to prime and even activate exorcistic scripts associated with Solomon during the experience of exorcistic episodes in Mark’s Gospel.<sup>196</sup>

As we shall see, the result of such an activation will probably be the inference that the Markan Jesus is far greater than Solomon, since he—unlike Solomon—casts out demons with his word alone, never needing angelic aid. Indeed, we shall see that the Davidic scripts associated with exorcism are often activated in contexts in which other, divine scripts are also activated. In fact, these divine scripts are nearer in the context and thus more likely to be triggered. Nevertheless, it does not overstate the evidence to suggest that the exorcistic activity of Mark’s Jesus, who is “the Christ” and “God’s son” (titles with Davidic connotations for many), will at least initially activate schemas and scripts associated with David, even if other factors push audience members to settle on divine scripts for making sense of the episodes.<sup>197</sup> In fact, this is exactly what may take place at this point for audience members.

194 The most forceful of the passages that insinuate a divine status that surpasses David and Solomon are 1:21–28; 2:1–12 and 5:1–20, on which see further below. On the Solomon-as-Exorcist-and-Healer schema, see cf. 1 Sam 16:14–16; *L.A.B.* 60:3; 4Q521; Josephus, *Ant.* 8.2.5 §§42–49; T. Sol., e.g., 2.5b–6. See further Dennis C. Duling, “Solomon, Exorcism, and the Son of David,” *HTR* 68 (1975): 235–53; Bruce Chilton, “Jesus Ben David: Reflections on the Davidssohnfrage,” *JSNT* 14 (1982): 88–112; Lidija Novakovic, *Messiah, the Healer of the Sick: A Study of Jesus As the Son of David in the Gospel of Matthew*, WUNT 2/170 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 96–108; Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 152; Anthony Le Donne, *The Historiographical Jesus: Memory, Typology, and the Son of David* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2009), 137–83; Marcus, *Mark* 8–16, 119–20.

195 Novakovic, *Messiah*, 104. Mark’s Jesus does, however, offer the minimal guidance that some demons may only be cast out through prayer (cf. Mark 9:28–29).

196 See further below in Chapters Four and Five.

197 See further below in Chapter Four on 1:21–28; 2:1–12; 3:7–12; 5:1–20.

Beyond the Davidic scripts associated with exorcism, the wild animals might activate images of creation for many in the audience.<sup>198</sup> The possibility for an activation of schemas and scripts associated with creation—already present in the allusive language of forty days of testing by the Adversary (see above)—strengthens the potential for an Adamic connection, especially since, as Marcus has argued,<sup>199</sup> in the Life of Adam and Eve—which probably reflects widespread tradition—Adam is raised to an exalted position by God, opposed by Satan, and worshiped by the other angels (LAE 12–15). Moreover, other Jewish scripts associate angelic assistance with provision of food and drink (T. Naph. 8.3–4; b. Sanh. 59b).<sup>200</sup>

However, it is not at all clear that these traditions were widespread in the *first century*, nor is it evident how influential they would have been among Mark's Hellenized audience. It seems to me, therefore, that we ought not (as Marcus and most others have tended to do) posit such a complex cognitive pattern for the audience's potential reception of this episode. As we saw in Chapter Two, research in the cognitive sciences indicates that readers and hearers use different memory pathways, which, in turn, significantly influence their recognition of markers of allusive language and the associated *synkristic* relationships.<sup>201</sup> Moreover, hearers have much less time to consider the allusive language since they have no ability to pause and reflect upon it.<sup>202</sup>

These qualifications aside, the mention of “wild animals” will likely activate schemas and scripts associated with Gen 1–2 LXX where Adam is depicted as living in the presence of the animals. Those who have had scripts associated with creation activated moments earlier by the mention of “forty days” (see above) will be all the more likely to (non-consciously) take that route here.<sup>203</sup> This “big picture” hearing, in which the Markan Jesus is “with the wild animals,” may well be adopted for many audience members. This “wild

198 See, e.g., Moloney, *Mark*, 37–40; Marcus, *Mark* 1–8, 69–71; Guelich, *Mark* 1–8:26, 39; Gnllka, *Markus*, 58. Cf. Richard Bauckham, “Jesus and the Wild Animals (Mark 1:13): A Christological Image for an Ecological Age,” in *Jesus of Nazareth: Lord and Christ: Essays on the Historical Jesus and New Testament Christology*, ed. Joel B. Green and Max Turner (Eugene, Ore.: Wipf and Stock, 1999), 3–21.

199 Marcus, *Mark* 1–8, 169.

200 Marcus, *Mark* 1–8, 168–70.

201 Robert J. Sternberg, *Cognitive Psychology* (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, 2009), 178; Edenburg, “Intertextuality, Literary Competence,” 131–48. Cf. Iverson, “An Enemy of the Gospel?,” 26–31.

202 Cf. Edenburg, “Intertextuality, Literary Competence,” 145.

203 On the role of prior activation in biasing certain scripts already in the simulated mental structure, see Morton Gernsbacher and Michael P. Kaschak, “Text Comprehension,”

animals” schema may likewise prime or activate scripts related to the hope for the renewal of creation, which includes peaceful coexistence among wild animals (cf. Isa 11:6–9; 65:25 LXX). Since Isa 11 LXX is already part of the matrix of Jewish traditions likely evoked by Mark 1:10–11 (cf. Isa 11:2), its activation in this context would be expected. Hartvigsen argues the script of the renewal of creation is not likely to be activated since the testing from the Adversary seems to last for the entirety of the forty days, and it is left unclear whether or not the Markan Jesus emerges victoriously.<sup>204</sup> However, while she is correct to note the ambiguity of the episode, the prior activation of Isa 11 (cf. 1:10), along with the presence of scripts and schemas so tied to creation (testing and the presence of wild animals), make its activation more likely than she suggests.

Pressing for (near?) equal status between Yahweh and Mark’s Jesus, both Johansson and Charles Gieschen have extended the allusion to the renewal of creation, suggesting that, in Mark 1:12–13, the Markan Jesus acts in a role typically reserved for the God of Israel,<sup>205</sup> who was expected to make a way in the wilderness (Isa 43:19 LXX), restoring creation to its initial state. As a result, the wild animals would honor Yahweh for doing so (Isa 43:20 LXX). If this is the case, the wild animals, like the unclean spirits later in the narrative, recognize Jesus truly in Mark 1:13 (cf. Isa 43:20 LXX).<sup>206</sup> For Gieschen, the result is that, “Jesus is YHWH himself who would come and restore the harmonious relationship with his creation as spoken of in Isaiah 43 and elsewhere.”<sup>207</sup> Similarly, Daniel Johansson has argued that, if this view is correct, “Jesus is not so much a Davidic Messiah who restores peace in the creation, which Isa 11:6–9, in fact, does not state that the messianic figure will do, but acting in the capacity of the creator himself.”<sup>208</sup> However, these conclusions do not necessarily follow for three reasons.

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in *The Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Psychology*, ed. Daniel Reisberg (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 462–74.

204 Hartvigsen, *Prepare*, 125.

205 Johansson, “Jesus and God in Mark,” 39; Charles A. Gieschen, “Why Was Jesus with the Wild Beasts (Mark 1:13)?,” *CTQ* 73 (2009): 77–80.

206 Johansson, “Jesus and God in Mark,” 39.

207 Gieschen, “Wild Beasts,” 79.

208 Johansson, “Jesus and God in Mark,” 39. Support for this view comes from the citation of Isa 40:3 LXX earlier in the prologue in Mark 1:2–3, since Isa 40:3 LXX is evoked by Isa 43:19 LXX, where Yahweh himself makes a way in the wilderness (καὶ ποιήσω ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ ὁδόν). The meaningfulness of the connection between Isa 43:19 and Isa 40:3, it is argued, is strengthened by the literary connection between Mark 1:2–3 and 1:12–13, which form an *inclusio* via the terms ἀγγελος and ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ. John is the messenger that prepares the

First, the inferences made by Gieschen and Johansson place far too much weight on a potential literary allusion, especially given the terseness of the allusive language (ἦν μετὰ τῶν θηρίων) and the temporal flow of the performance of this brief episode. Second, the strong connection between Isa 11:1–6 and 11:6–9 implies that the peaceful restoration of creation is a result of the ministry of the anointed Davidic figure, upon whom the Spirit of the Lord rests (11:1–2; cf. Mark 1:10–11). Third, regardless of who does what in the *Isaianic* traditions, in the *Markan* narrative, the portrait of Jesus has not yet been developed enough to sustain the weight of such an explicit identification with Yahweh. While images of creation and its renewal will be predictably activated for many, suggesting that ἦν μετὰ τῶν θηρίων is “Mark’s way of saying that the wild beasts recognize Jesus’s true identity”<sup>209</sup> says too much.

Thus, it seems likely that both images of creation and exorcism would be activated initially for many audience members. However, given the prior activations of scripts associated with creation, the same will be more reliably selected (even if non-consciously) at this point. Regarding the possibility of hints at the restoration of the created order, Hooker cautions that, “[the narrator] simply tells us that Jesus was among animals, and we should therefore be wary of reading too much into this verse.”<sup>210</sup> In terms of audience members’ first experience of the line, Hooker is likely correct. However, once these audience members have opportunity for further reflection, it is not at all clear (at least to me) that this is the case. Indeed, Hooker’s specific wording that we should be “wary of reading too much into” the phrase, ἦν μετὰ τῶν θηρίων, ironically and antithetically mirrors the advice of Quintilian, who refers to *emphasis* as “when a hidden meaning is extracted from a phrase” (*Inst.* 9.2.64).<sup>211</sup>

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way of the Lord in the wilderness in 1:2–3, whereas the angels care for the needs of the Spirit possessed Markan Jesus in the wilderness in 1:13.

209 Johansson, “Jesus and God in Mark,” 39.

210 Hooker, *Mark*, 50.

211 Not only is the verb ἦν ambiguous, but so is θηρίον. In fact, as discussed in Chapter Two, the Latin counterpart of θηρίον, *fera*, was used by Quintilian as the example par excellence of *emphasis* through comparison using an ambiguous term. Quintilian (*Inst.* 9.2.64) cites a line from Vergil’s *Aeneid* (4.550–551), in which Dido complains of the institution of marriage to Anna: “Ah, that I could not spend my life apart from wedlock, a blameless life, like some wild creature (*etrac more ferae*), and not know such cares” (*non licuit thalami expertem sine crimine vitam / etrac more ferae*). On the surface, the life of a wild beast is attractive. Freedom from marriage is desirable because wild animals do not go through heartbreak. However, the life of a wild beast is also contemptible because it suggests a life fit for beasts rather than humans. The ambiguity surrounding the life of a wild beast leaves the imagery open through *emphasis*.

Thus, from an ancient rhetorical perspective, the inherent ambiguity of Mark 1:13 may have signaled to the audience that there may be more going on than first appears—at least once the opportunity for reflection arises. As we already have seen, the audience has been encouraged to think of the Markan Jesus in divine terms using allusive language reserved for Yahweh through the use of *emphasis* through ambiguity with the title ὁ κύριος (1:3) and through the nickname, ὁ ἰσχυρότερος (1:7). Moreover, *emphasis* need not exploit single words with multiple meanings; ambiguous phrases may be leveraged, as well.<sup>212</sup> We should therefore not be surprised to find another exploitation of ambiguity in the service of *emphasis* in Mark 1:12–13. In this case, there are suggestions of the involvement of Mark's Jesus in the restoration of creation.

### *Kyriotic Sonship in the Prologue*

There are a variety of ways to begin a narrative in ancient literary theory. Of the four major types of narrative beginnings, we saw that Mark's Gospel most nearly approximates the "dramatic prologue" (πρόλογος), which provided a sample of the subject matter so that the audience would know beforehand what or who the story was about. Thus equipped, the audience was expected to use the prologue to help them understand the story that followed. From this perspective, the Markan prologue offers hints of the characterization of Mark's Jesus in the narrative as a whole by introducing the Davidic and divine *synkristic* relationships that will shape the portrait of Mark's Jesus for the audience. While much is left in the shadows, the connections with David and God are insinuated by the term Χριστός in 1:1 and the use of *emphasis* with κύριος in 1:3 (cf. 1:9). From the prologue onward, Mark's Jesus is the *kyriotic* Son, even if in an inchoate form. The prologue thereby teaches the audience how to think about Jesus, offering tantalizing clues that they will be expected to use in order to understand the puzzling portrait of Mark's Jesus as they progress through the narrative. It is important to note that Davidic and divine schemas—and not, say, those related to Moses or the Isaianic servant—are the ones found in the prologue. While other schemas and scripts are used later in the Gospel to inform the characterization of Mark's Jesus, they serve a supplementary role to schemas and scripts associated with God and David.

Along these lines, the testimony from the narrator in the incipit used titles for Mark's Jesus that, for some, will have connoted images of a royal, ideal Davidic king or messiah. But υἱὸς θεοῦ will have also activated other more ubiquitous

<sup>212</sup> Quintilian, *Inst.* 9.2.64.



scripts associated with the emperor as a, “god” and “son of god.” Divinity was a gradient of honor and status in the first-century milieu of Mark’s Gospel, and the characterization of Jesus immediately blends the human and the divine. However, the prior activation of Davidic scripts by the use of Χριστός will be enough for many to tip the scales (if unconsciously) in favor of a Davidic rendering of υἱὸς θεοῦ. Once the incipit is finished, the prologue’s characterization of Mark’s Jesus is thoroughly imbued with Jewish scripts: the testimonies given by “Isaiah” and John (ὁ κύριος [1:2–3] and ὁ ἰσχυρότερός [1:7], respectively) continue the insinuations that Mark’s Jesus would not be a traditional ideal king, but one characterized as both Davidic and divine. Further, the tripartite divine testimony offered at the baptism provides supporting evidence for this characterization, acting as a stamp of divine approval on the cryptic portrait of Jesus thus far (1:10–11). There, the God of Israel testifies on behalf of the narrator that Jesus is truly “son” according to the prologue, even casting the anointing of the Spirit in terms of the Hellenistic notion of divine possession by the Spirit that descends *into* him. Immediately (εὐθύς) after his baptism, this Spirit-possessed Jesus is forced into the wilderness in a way that portrays him as an agent for the renewal of creation.

It must be kept in mind that the temporal flow of the prologue does not allow for extended reflection by those in the audience. Nevertheless the Davidic and divine dimensions of the characterization of Mark’s Jesus are brought before audience members in the prologue. Therefore, this narrative beginning provides fertile soil from which the seeds of Markan characterization of Jesus will develop over the course of the narrative. While little is clear or explicit in Mark 1:1–13, the audience has reason to infer that the actions once reserved for both the God of Israel and his son, the Davidic Messiah, may now be attributed to Mark’s Jesus. Only time will tell to what degree and in what way these seemingly mutually exclusive categories co-exist in the *kyriotic* sonship of the enigmatic man who came from Nazareth for John’s baptism.

## The Narrative Development of *Kyriotic* Sonship, Part 1 (1:14–9:13)

In Chapter Three, we explored the subtle hints in the prologue (1:1–13), which proved fertile soil for Mark's narrative portrait of Jesus. There we found indirect insinuations of *kyriotic* sonship. While little was made explicit, those in the audience would have detected, to varying degrees, suggestions that Mark's Jesus was being assimilated to both David and God. This characterization was buoyed along by a sophisticated use of *emphasis*, allusive language, and *testimonia*, together with intentional omission or narrative opacity—what modern literary critics have termed narrative “gaps.”<sup>1</sup> These figures drew audience members into the narrative and encouraged inference about the characterization of Mark's Jesus as the narrative proper began.

In Chapters Four and Five, we turn our attention to the development of this portrait of *kyriotic* sonship from Mark 1:14 to 13:37. In terms of narrative characterization, this section forms the “runway” from which Mark's portrait of Jesus “takes flight” once the Son of David question is registered; as we shall see, 12:35–37 assimilates Mark's Jesus to God and David more explicitly than anywhere in the narrative. The result of the Gospel's use of the rhetoric of inference is a gradual building to a climactic demonstration of Mark's Jesus as the *kyriotic* Son in the passion and resurrection (Chapter Six). It will be argued below that the narrative presents the passion and resurrection of Jesus as a response to the Son of David question, which is left intentionally unanswered as a hook for the audience in 12:35–37. In other words, Mark 1:14–13:37 (Chapters Four and Five) sets the groundwork for the demonstration of Mark's Jesus as the *kyriotic* Son in 14:1–16:8 (Chapter Six).

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1 Though recall that the seeds of gap theory were sown as far back as Theophrastus, who is cited by Demetrius's *On Style* 222 in his discussion of persuasive tactics. See further Chapter Two above. On gaps from the perspective of modern literary theory, see Wolfgang Iser, “Indeterminacy and the Reader's Response in Prose Fiction,” in *Aspects of Narrative: Selected Papers from the English Institute*, ed. J. Hillis Miller (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), 1–45. See further Kathy Reiko Maxwell, *Hearing Between the Lines: The Audience as Fellow-Workers in Luke-Acts and Its Literary Milieu*, LNTS 425 (London; New York: T. & T. Clark, 2010), 1–26.

Naturally, the entirety of Mark's Gospel, from the incipit to the silence of the women, contributes to the characterization of *kyriotic* sonship. However, in this chapter, even as in the study as a whole, this study focuses only on the most noteworthy and important texts for *kyriotic* sonship.<sup>2</sup> We now turn to the most important contributions to the characterization of *kyriotic* sonship from 1:14 to 9:13, beginning with the testimony derived from the unclean spirits in 1:21–28.

### Testimony Derived from the Unclean Spirits (Mark 1:21–28)

While teaching in a synagogue in Capernaum, the Spirit-possessed Jesus (1:10) encounters another spirit-possessed individual (ἄνθρωπος ἐν πνεύματι ἀκαθάρτῳ), whose response highlights the characterization of the protagonist. Despite the fact that the unclean spirit is trying to gain control of the Markan Jesus at the story level, its reaction functions as a *testimonium* in the Gospel's persuasive program, arguing for a portrait of Jesus in keeping with *kyriotic* sonship proceeding from the prologue. The suspicions formed in the prologue will continue to gain steam as the narrative builds upon the inchoate portrait of a man with as much in common with David as with God.

### Rhetorical Questions (1:23–24a)

The encounter between the unclean spirits and the Markan Jesus begins with a series of rhetorical questions.<sup>3</sup> Questions (ἐρωτήσεις), both answered and

2 For example, while the texts that portray Mark's Jesus as a great teacher after the way of Solomon bear obvious importance for *kyriotic* sonship, they will not receive treatment below (cf. 4:1–34). These texts deserve attention in the own right, which cannot be adequately sustained in this context.

3 In Mark's Gospel, the term "unclean spirit" (πνεῦμα ἀκάθαρτον) is essentially synonymous with *daimon*/demon (δαίμονιον) and is typically associated with the realm of the dead in Greco-Roman contexts. While the term "unclean spirits" is itself unattested in extrabiblical Greek literature, the phrase "unclean spirit" (πνεῦμα ἀκάθαρτον) does show up in Zech 13:2 LXX where it is associated with Yahweh's expurgation of "the unclean spirit" from the land. If this passage were activated in the minds of those in the Markan audience, not only would the eschatological nature of the scene be highlighted, but also the Markan Jesus would be cast, at least in part, as once again doing that which was expected of Yahweh (see below). On unclean spirits and the realm of the dead, see Peter G. Bolt, *Jesus' Defeat of Death: Persuading Mark's Early Readers*, SNTSMS 125 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 53–60. On the eschatological nature of the scene, see Mary Ann Beavis, *Mark*, Paideia (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 52.

unanswered, were deft rhetorical figures that accompanied Ps-Longinus's plain style ([*Subl.*] 18).<sup>4</sup> Since they induce audience participation, questions enhance the persuasive goals of the orator through subtlety, and are, for this reason, much more forceful than making direct statements.<sup>5</sup> When the audience fills these gaps with knowledge from the speech or narrative,<sup>6</sup> they teach themselves (having arrived at the answer on their own) in such a way as to flatter their own intelligence and further predispose them to the argument at hand.<sup>7</sup>

The first two questions from the unclean spirits are left open-ended, and, at the character level, are intended to confront the Markan Jesus in an attempt to thwart whatever he had in store for them: τί ἡμῖν καὶ σοί, Ἰησοῦ Ναζαρηνέ; ἤλθες ἀπολέσαι ἡμᾶς; (1:24). The first query is ambiguous, "What have we to do with you?" or "Of what concern is that to us or you?" and its meaning derives from the context.<sup>8</sup> Scholarly opinions abound concerning the meaning of the first question. The unclean spirits may be asking why there is enmity between them and Jesus.<sup>9</sup> Likewise, the question may indicate that the unclean spirits want to avoid being troubled by him.<sup>10</sup> In the case of the latter, the first question may

4 On the use of unanswered questions to prompt audience inference, see Chapter Two above on "intentional omission."

5 Ps-Longinus, [*Subl.*] 18.1–2; cf. Demetrius, *Eloc.* 222, 279.

6 The benefits of well-placed questions easily transferred to literary contexts, especially in those texts, which, like the Gospel of Mark, were written for oral delivery.

7 This is Demetrius's point when he writes, "For when [the listener] infers what you have omitted, he is not only listening to you, but he becomes your witness and reacts more favorably. For he is made aware of his own intelligence through you, who have given him the opportunity to be intelligent" (συνεῖς γὰρ τὸ ἐλλειφθὲν ὑπὸ σοῦ οὐκ ἀκροατῆς μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ μάρτυς σου γίνεται, καὶ ἅμα εὐμενέστερος. Συνετὸς γὰρ ἑαυτῷ δοκεῖ διὰ σέ τὸν ἀφορμὴν παρεσχηκότα αὐτῷ τοῦ συνιέναι.) (*Eloc.* 222).

8 Cf. Epictetus, *Diatr.* 2.19.16; 20.11; Martial *Epigr.* 1.76.11–12. See further Adela Yarbro Collins, *Mark: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 169. A similar question is used in John 2:4 where the Johannine Jesus engages his mother in an ambiguous manner: τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί, γύναι; οὐπω ἤκει ἡ ὥρα μου. Cf. Judg 11:12 LXX; 1 Kgs 17:18 LXX; 2 Kgs 3:13 LXX. See further Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, 2 vols. (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2003), 1:506; Jo-Ann A. Brant, *John*, Paideia (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 56–57. See further Rodney J. Decker, *Mark 1–8: A Handbook on the Greek Text* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2014), 27.

9 Joel Marcus, *Mark 1–8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 27 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 187.

10 Morna D. Hooker, *The Gospel According to Saint Mark*, BNTC 2 (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1991), 64.

serve a defensive function in preparation for the second question: “Have you come to destroy us?”<sup>11</sup> Lastly, some, such as Dietrich-Alex Koch, have argued that the question expresses submission in this context.<sup>12</sup>

However, given the ambiguity of the question, these options (and more) are all viable among listeners in the performance audience. For our purposes, it is most important to note that neither question is answered in the narrative, thus creating a gap that beckons the Markan audience to ponder their own answers to these questions:<sup>13</sup> “What is the relationship between the Markan Jesus to the unclean spirits? Will he destroy them? If so, will they meet their end now or sometime later?”

If scripts associated with Zech 13:2 LXX (τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἀκάθαρτον) are primed by Mark 1:23 (ἄνθρωπος ἐν πνεύματι ἀκαθάρτῳ), certain audience members may be encouraged to develop their own answers accordingly: the Markan Jesus and the unclean spirits are at odds; whether now or later, these spirits from the dead will meet their doom.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, in Zech 13:2 LXX it is Yahweh himself who will remove the unclean spirit from the land. Thus, if those scripts derived from Zech 13:2 LXX are activated, so too will the *synkristic* relationship between God and Mark’s Jesus be triggered, which would lead to the inference that Jesus acts in God’s place here, exorcising unclean spirits from the land.<sup>15</sup> The notion that God was the one to rebuke unclean spirits is not relegated to Zech 13:2 LXX; it is also evident in the texts found at Qumran, which suggest that many demons can be cast out by God’s name alone. For example,

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- 11 Otto Bauernfeind, *Die Worte der Dämonen im Markusevangelium* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2009), 3–12.
  - 12 Dietrich-Alex Koch, *Die Bedeutung der Wundererzählungen für die Christologie des Markusevangeliums*, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche 42 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1975), 57–61.
  - 13 So also Bolt, *Jesus’ Defeat of Death*, 53; Robert M. Fowler, *Let the Reader Understand: Reader-Response Criticism and the Gospel of Mark* (Harrisburg: Trinity, 1996), 126, 131–32. Cf. Wolfgang Iser, “The Interaction Between Text and Readers,” in *The Reader in the Text: Essays on Audience and Interpretation* (ed. Susan R. Suleiman and Inge Crosman; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 106–19; idem, “The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach,” *New Literary History* 3 (1972): 279–99.
  - 14 On the association with unclean spirits and daimons/demons with the realm of the dead, see Bolt, *Jesus’ Defeat of Death*, 53–60.
  - 15 The notion that God (or God’s Spirit) would cleanse the land and people of unclean or demonic spirits is attested elsewhere in Jewish tradition; see, e.g., 1QS IV, 18–23; T. Levi. 18:6–12. This authority was sometimes lent to a messiah or eschatological deliverer figure (cf. 11Melch 11, 1–25). In later Jewish traditions, the Messiah could be the agent of this eschatological cleansing (cf. Pesiq. Rab. 36.1). See further Marcus, *Mark 1*–8, 193.

in an Aramaic fragment found in Cave 4, we find instructions for an exorcist to rebuke an evil spirit, “by the Name of YHWH, who forgives sins and transgression” (4Q560 I, 4).<sup>16</sup> Similarly, in Genesis Apocryphon, Abram prays that God might rebuke an evil spirit sent upon Pharaoh’s household (1QapGen [1Q20] xx, 28). Those familiar with these streams of tradition may find it exceptional that the Markan Jesus rebukes the unclean spirit without recourse to outside authority.<sup>17</sup>

In sum, these rhetorical questions draw the Markan audience to fill out meaning left unclear in the story itself on the basis of the prior insinuations in the prologue. Moreover, these questions prepare the minds of audience members for the testimony to Mark’s Jesus as the “Holy One of God” and will help inform later inferences about the characterization of Mark’s Jesus facilitated through the rhetoric of inference.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, this testimony, like the one given at the baptism (and those to come), forms the scaffolding around which the more figural and allusive aspects of the characterization of Mark’s Jesus take shape.<sup>19</sup>

### *Testimony in the Demonic Revelation of the Markan Jesus (1:24b)*

In an attempt to gain control over Jesus, the unclean spirits follow their questions with a revelation of the identity of the Markan protagonist.<sup>20</sup> The

16 Translation modified from Douglas L. Penney and Michael O. Wise, “By the Power of Beelzebub: An Aramaic Incantation Formula from Qumran (4Q560),” *JBL* 113 (1994): 632.

17 This same factor may help differentiate the Markan Jesus from Solomon, who has to call upon the archangel Ouriel to subdue the demon, Orniat (cf. T. Sol. 2:1–9).

18 On the role of prior activation in biasing certain scripts already in the simulated mental structure, see Morton Gernsbacher and Michael P. Kaschak, “Text Comprehension,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Psychology*, ed. Daniel Reisberg (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 462–74.

19 Cf. Quintilian, *Inst.* 6.3.48. On this function of testimony in relation to the rhetoric of inference, see “Testimony and its Role in Inference Generation” in Chapter Two above.

20 It is well established in the magical papyri that one could exert power over another being, especially supernatural beings, through knowledge of that being’s name. For example, note the following from a magician attempting to gain control over the moon.

You’ll, willy nilly, do the NN task

Because I know your lights in full detail, . . .

I truly know that you are full of guile . . .

As I instruct you, hurl him to this ill

Because, Kore, I know your good and great Majestic names (ὅτι οἶδα σὲ τὰ καλὰ καὶ μεγάλα, Κόρη, ὀνόματα σεμνά) (*PGM* IV. 2251–2253; 2289; 2343–2345).

See discussion in Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 169. See Karl Preisendanz, *Papyri graecae magicae: die griechischen zauberpapyri*, 2 vols., 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1973), 1:142,

unclean spirits reveal something initially only hinted at in the prologue: Jesus of Nazareth, however human, is the “Holy One of God” (ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ). What exactly does this phrase connote in the Markan story world? As we have come to expect with Mark’s Gospel, there is more to the connotation than the denotation might first suggest.

Debate has swirled over the question of the most appropriate meaning assigned to the epithet ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ. Some, such as Larry Hurtado, have understood the title as an acclamation of Jesus’s “identity or true significance.”<sup>21</sup> This observation, however true, does not go far enough since it leaves unexplained the meaning of ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ. Others, such as Dennis Nineham, take the line as a statement of the messianic status of the Markan Jesus.<sup>22</sup> While we should not rule out this interpretation among audience members, the title ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ is not attested as a messianic title in the LXX or other extant contemporary Jewish literature.<sup>23</sup> Still others, such as Simon Gathercole (following a stream in German scholarship), find within the unclean spirits’ words the recognition that the Markan Jesus is a preexistent supernatural being.<sup>24</sup> Yet the Jewish association of heavenly beings with the title “holy one”<sup>25</sup>

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144. Translation by Edward N. O’Neil in Hans Dieter Betz, *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation: Including the Demotic Spells: Texts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 78–81.

21. Larry W. Hurtado, *Mark* (New York: Harper & Row, 1983), 14.

22. Dennis E. Nineham, *The Gospel of St. Mark*, PNTC (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1968), 79.

23. But see 1Q30 1.2, which appears to refer to the “holy Messiah.” See also, Marcus, *Mark* 1–8, 188–89.

24. Simon J. Gathercole, *The Preexistent Son: Recovering the Christologies of Matthew, Mark, And Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 152. Gathercole is not the only one who views Jesus as a preexistent being. He carries forward a trend predominate among German scholars. See Adolf Schlatter, *Markus. Der Evangelist für die Griechen* (Stuttgart: Calwer, 1935), 55; Marie-Joseph Lagrange, *Evangile selon Saint Marc*, Études Bibliques (Paris: Lecoffre, 1911), 23; Ernst Lohmeyer, *Das Evangelium des Markus: Ergänzungsheft*, KNT (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1937), 53; Johannes Schreiber, *Die Markuspassion: eine redaktionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung*, BZNW 68 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1993), 220, 374 n. 60; R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 113.

25. Gathercole notes Deut 33:2; Ps 89:5, 7; Dan 4:17; Zech 14:5; Jude 14. Further, he points to Daniel’s reference to a (singular) “holy one coming down from heaven” (ἅγιος ἀπ’ οὐρανοῦ κατέβη) (4:13) and the “holy one coming down from heaven” (ἅγιον καταβαίνοντα ἀπὸ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ) (4:23). However, Gathercole places an undue weight on verbs of “coming,” like the one we find on the lips of the unclean spirit (Mark 1:24). Even if one were to hear the references in Daniel in the background of Mark 1:24, the Danielic heavenly beings



does not provide enough justification for making ontological statements about preexistence, since divinity itself does not necessitate preexistence in the Roman world.<sup>26</sup>

Finally, Mary Ann Beavis has interpreted ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ as the equivalent of “holy man of God,” following the description of Elisha in 2 Kgs 4:9 (ἄνθρωπος τοῦ θεοῦ ἅγιος οὐδὲτος) and of Aaron in Ps 105:16 LXX (τὸν ἅγιον κυρίου).<sup>27</sup> However, a priestly or honorable man portrait, if one stops there, is far too mundane given the *kyriotic* insinuations thus far. As we have already seen, the prologue has characterized Jesus in ways that connote divinity. Given the only loose connections between ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ and scripts or schemas associated with priestly figures, honorable men, or even messianic ones, the divine scripts from the prologue would likely inform how the audience experienced the line in 1:24. Further, while it is not impossible that the unclean spirits acclaim the Markan Jesus as a holy man in 1:24, it is difficult to imagine why such a line would be silenced. Lastly, the immediate narrative context points toward the union of Mark’s Jesus with Yahweh through the Spirit’s possession of him (1:7–8, 9–11). Before moving on, it is worth acknowledging that Beavis has objected to understanding the words of the unclean spirit in a “confessional” manner: “the intent of the man’s outcry is not confessional but defensive.”<sup>28</sup> However, this protest neglects the perlocutionary effect of the speech act,<sup>29</sup> which, in the hands of

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are themselves not preexistent. See Gathercole, *The Preexistent Son*, 152. For a thorough critique of Gathercole’s emphasis on the preexistent potential of verbs of coming in Mark and elsewhere, see Adela Yarbro Collins and John J. Collins, *King and Messiah as Son of God: Divine, Human, and Angelic Messianic Figures in Biblical and Related Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 123–26.

26 See Michael Peppard, *The Son of God in the Roman World: Divine Sonship in Its Social and Political Context* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 31–49.

27 Beavis, *Mark*, 52. Cf. Marcus, *Mark* 1–8, 188.

28 Beavis, *Mark*, 53.

29 By “perlocutionary effect,” I refer to the psychological consequences of a speech act upon a listener (e.g., persuading, convincing, scaring, inspiring, moving to action, etc.). By contrast, a “locutionary act” refers to the actual utterance and its intended meaning, and the “illocutionary effect” is the intended effect of the locutionary act. For example, take the locution, “Is there any salt?” The illocutionary effect may be for the listener to pass the salt, whereas the perlocutionary effect might be the persuading the listener (who is also the cook) to add salt during the next preparation of the meal. Meaning is not isolating to intent and is far more complex than first meets the eye. As Austin once wrote, “Saying something will often, or even normally, produce certain consequential effects upon the feelings, thoughts, or actions of the audience, or of the speaker, or of other persons: and it may be done with the design, intention, or purpose of producing them” (101). It is this matrix of meaning that this study is most concerned with—and which has been

the lector, serves a purpose for the audience apart from the intent of the characters in the story. In this case, the defensive effort buoys the portrait of Mark's Jesus begun in the prologue.

In the immediate narrative context, the Markan Jesus is the "Holy One of God" in the sense that he is the "holiest of God's elect,"<sup>30</sup> due to his being possessed by the Holy Spirit that entered into him at his baptism (1:10).<sup>31</sup> In this way, his purity and holiness stand in contrast to the uncleanness and impurity of the *unclean* spirits (πνεύματι ἀκαθάρτῳ) in the possessed man.<sup>32</sup> However, there is more to this title than might first appear. The title "Holy One" (ὁ ἅγιος) is also used no less than twenty-four times in Isaiah LXX as a title for the God of Israel,<sup>33</sup> and, the voice of "Isaiah" has already been used in contexts that reveal to the audience *kyriotic* dimensions of the characterization of Mark's Jesus. Thus, on the surface, the unclean spirits acclaim Jesus as the paragon of purity through the epithet ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ. But the words ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ may also activate schemas of Israel's God, who acted on her behalf over and over again throughout Isaiah. Furthermore, if scripts associated with Zech 13:2 LXX were activated by the reference to "unclean spirit(s)," there will be hints that the Markan Jesus is acting as Yahweh on the Day of the Lord, clearing out the unclean spirit(s) from the land.

Given the potential for two viable referents for ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ (highlighting the purity of the Markan Jesus and insinuating a divine connection), we are once more left with *emphasis* through ambiguity embedded in the words of the unclean spirit. The epithet ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ connotes the divine holiness imbued at Jesus's baptism at one level, but, upon further reflection, it suggests

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too often neglected in reflection upon the narrative characterization of Mark's Jesus. See J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 2d ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975), 101.

30 Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 170.

31 So also M. Eugene Boring, *Mark: A Commentary*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006), 64; Aage Pilgaard, *Kommentar til Markusevangeliet* (Aarhus: Aarhus Universitetsforlag, 2008), 85; Kirsten Marie Hartvigsen, *Prepare the Way of the Lord: Towards a Cognitive Poetic Analysis of Audience Involvement with Characters and Events in the Markan World*, BZNW 180 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012), 122, 134.

32 Similarly, Focant, who writes, "Jesus shares in an unusual way in God's holiness." Camille Focant, *The Gospel According to Mark: A Commentary*, trans. Leslie R. Keylock (Eugene, Ore.: Pickwick, 2012), 66. Cf. Boring, *Mark*, 64.

33 LXX Isa 1:4; 5:19, 24; 10:20; 12:6; 17:7; 29:23; 30:11–12, 15; 31:1; 37:23; 40:25; 41:20; 43:3, 14–15; 45:11; 47:4; 48:17; 49:7; 55:5; 60:9, 14. However, the title is never used of a messianic figure in the LXX or the DSS.

an assimilation of Jesus to God.<sup>34</sup> Thus, for those in the audience who infer a divine connection through the title ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ the *synkristic* relationship between Mark's Jesus and Yahweh will probably be primed or activated (cf. 1:3). Such a deduction will strengthen the *kyriotic* side of the portrait moving forward, informing future inferences based on further clues leveraging allusive language for God.<sup>35</sup> However, if the "testimony" of the unclean spirits hails Jesus in allusive language that connotes God via *emphasis*, what follows will either continue that characterization or add to it hints of association with David's son, Solomon.

The response of the Markan Jesus to the unclean spirit is as harsh as it is commanding. While the unclean spirit acts as though it believed it could control God's Holy One, the Markan Jesus rebukes it and tells it to "shut up and come out of him!" (φίμωθήτι καὶ ἔξελθε ἐξ αὐτοῦ) (1:25). The man convulses and shrieks until the unclean spirit eventually comes out of him (1:26). As we have already seen in Chapter Three, Jewish reflection on David's son, Solomon, cast him as the exorcist par excellence.<sup>36</sup> The exorcistic behavior of Jesus at this point may prime or activate schemas of Solomon as an exorcist. However, the nearer script is the divine one, triggered by the title ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ and the reference to πνεύματι ἀκαθάρτῳ, which together may activate Yahweh's clearing of the land from impure spirits (1:23–24; cf. Zech 13:2 LXX). Therefore, if Solomonian scripts are primed or activated, they will probably (and perhaps even non-consciously) be discarded in favor of scripts associated with Yahweh as exorcist. "Someone greater than Solomon is here."

### *The Perlocutionary Effect of the Markan Jesus's Response (1:25–26)*

As discussed in Chapter Three above, the Greco-Roman mythic tradition commonly depicted a god coming to earth as a bird and walking among humans disguised as a mere mortal. There we discussed the potential for ancient

34 Similarly, Boring, *Mark*, 64. However, Boring does not acknowledge the rhetorical figure.

35 Similarly, Arseny Ermakov, "The Holy One of God in Markan Narrative," *HBT* 36 (2014): 159–84.

36 Cf. LAB 60:3; Josephus, *Ant.* 8.2.5 §§45–49, along with the entirety of T. Sol. See further Dennis C. Duling, "Solomon, Exorcism, and the Son of David," *HTR* 68 (1975): 235–53; Bruce Chilton, "Jesus Ben David: Reflections on the Davidssohnfrage," *JSNT* 14 (1982): 88–112; Lidija Novakovic, *Messiah, the Healer of the Sick: A Study of Jesus As the Son of David in the Gospel of Matthew*, WUNT 2/170 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 96–108; Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 152; Anthony Le Donne, *The Historiographical Jesus: Memory, Typology, and the Son of David* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2009), 137–83; Joel Marcus, *Mark 8–16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 27A (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 119–20.

audiences to have interpreted the baptism of the Markan Jesus along similar lines (cf. 1:9–11), as the coming of a god in disguise. Viewed thusly, the unclean spirit—whose supranatural existence made available supernatural knowledge<sup>37</sup>—could see things about the Markan Jesus that were disguised from the onlookers in the narrative (cf. 1:24).<sup>38</sup> While the supernatural testimony registers with those in the audience, the Markan Jesus censures the spirit, so that it cannot reveal who he is to other characters in the story before the appropriate time (cf. 14:62). The perlocutionary force of the Markan Jesus’s response emphasizes the privileged position of audience members as “insiders” and further persuades them of the characterization ignited in the prologue. The reason for this confirmation is that the evil spirits corroborate what audience members are beginning to infer, but what *characters* are kept from learning.<sup>39</sup> This human Jesus, who hails from Nazareth, is also worthy of *synkristic* assimilation to God.<sup>40</sup>

### *Emotional Response of the Bystanders (1:27)*

The emotional response of those standing nearby in the story world likewise encourages audience participation and engenders further affinity to the portrait of Jesus as the *kyriotic* Son. In 1:27, the audience listens in as “everyone was amazed” (ἐθαμβήθησαν ἅπαντες) by the Markan Jesus’s authority over unclean spirits, whom he controlled with his words alone.<sup>41</sup> In their amazement, a question bursts forth from the lips of the bystanders that once again beckons audience participation: “What is this?! A new teaching with authority! He even commands the unclean spirits and they obey him!” In the case of the former, the question put before the audience fits Ps-Longinus’s discussion of the use of questions in [Subl.] 18, with its quick interplay of question and answer

37 Bolt, *Jesus’ Defeat of Death*, 56–64; Beavis, *Mark*, 52.

38 The unclean spirits’ response to him, τί ἡμῖν καὶ σοί, Ἰησοῦ Ναζαρηνέ; ἡλθες ἀπολέσαι ἡμᾶς; οἶδά σε τίς εἶ, ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ, sums up the scenario nicely. They recognize that the man, Jesus of Nazareth, is *actually* a god, the Holy One (of God). See further below.

39 Indeed, despite the fact that “all” the bystanders are “amazed” (ἐθαμβήθησαν ἅπαντες) in 1:27, there is no indication whatsoever they realize the significance of (or even heard) the “testimony” of the unclean spirits.

40 Moreover, for those in the audience who believe that the battle between the Markan Jesus and the Adversary is already won, this portrait will confirm that victory has been achieved, while those who believe the battle is yet to find its conclusion will have at this early point in the narrative foreshadowing of the Adversary’s defeat. Cf. Hartvigsen, *Prepare*, 135.

41 In most contemporary accounts of exorcisms, the exorcist uses an incantation of some sort, along with a prop, in order to compel the spirit to leave (cf. *PGM* v. 320–329; Lucian *Philops* 15–16). See further e.g., T. Sol., along with Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 166, 173.

concerning the characterization of Mark's Jesus;<sup>42</sup> the perlocutionary effect is that the audience is further sensitized to the debate swirling around the characterization of the Markan Jesus. The bystanders' question, "*What is this?!*" is followed by their own answer, "A new teaching, one with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him!" In the Markan Jesus, the bystanders have encountered a person whose authority extends to the supernatural world. In response, they cannot help but spread the word about what they have heard (1:28).

The first part of the response from the bystanders is interrogative, but the whole episode is shrouded in amazement bordering on disbelief.<sup>43</sup> This emotional outburst is meant to draw the audience to ponder the same question: *What is this?!* However, no response is given in the story itself beyond the observation of his command over unclean spirits. The unrelenting performance charges on before many will be able to ponder much at all about the characterization of Mark's Jesus, aside from the sense they initially make from the scene, most likely based on the scripts associated with God's cleansing of the land. Indeed, some in the audience may not have the question, "What is this?!" answered until after the performance concludes, and they are able to reflect on the episode in the context of the story as a whole. Others will only "get it" upon subsequent hearings. In any case, audience members will eventually be led to infer that the Holy One of God possesses divine powers akin to those associated with (but far exceeding) those of David.<sup>44</sup>

Thus, the title and actions assigned to Mark's Jesus in this episode will probably lead audience members to interpret the scene in light of his assimilation to God begun in the prologue. While the performance moves too quickly for many listeners to grasp the full significance of the event at this stage, a character has recognized a divine dimension of the characterization of the Markan Jesus for the very first time. Albeit by unclean spirits, who possessed a

42 Ps-Longinus offers an example from Demosthenes's *First Philippic* (*Or.* 4.10 and 44) in which question and answer make the orator's point quite forcefully. In response, Ps-Longinus quips, "Here a bare statement would have been utterly inadequate. As it is, the inspiration and quick play of the question and answer—and his way of confronting his own words as if they were someone else's—make the passage not only more sublime but also more persuasive through his use of the figure" ([*Subl.*] 18.1).

43 *Contra* Fowler, *Reader*, 126; Bolt, *Jesus' Defeat of Death*, 52. However, the subtle question-answer interplay is better supported from ancient rhetorical theory.

44 Cf. *L.A.B.* 60:3; Josephus, *Ant.* 8.2.5 §§45–49, along with the entirety of T. Sol. Though he does not countenance the *kyriotic* Davidic contours of the episode, Focant correctly notes that this pericope, "puts the reader on the track of a true recognition of Jesus." Focant, *Mark*, 67.

man, Mark's Jesus has been hailed as God's Holy One. The malevolent spirits' attempts to control the Markan Jesus formed a testimony for the audience by exploiting the polyvalency in the epithet, "the Holy One of God" (ὁ ἅγιος τοῦ θεοῦ). On the surface of things, the unclean spirits were simply highlighting the Spirit-induced holiness and purity that the Markan Jesus acquired at his baptism (1:10). However, attentive audience members will hear a deeper meaning in the phrase, ὁ ἅγιος, if this term and Jesus's exorcistic behavior activates Isaianic schemas and scripts associated with Yahweh, the Holy One, who purifies the land from unclean spirits.<sup>45</sup>

### "Who Can Forgive Sins Except the One God?" (Mark 2:1–12)

We pick up in the narrative to find Jesus, once more, teaching in Capernaum. As in 1:23–27, rhetorical figures, including intentional omission and *emphasis*, are used to prime and activate *kyriotic* scripts and perhaps Davidic ones. The revelation that this Jesus has at his disposal the authority to forgive sins on earth—and heal people's infirmities—as the mysterious "Son of Humanity" will activate relevant scripts linked with Yahweh's salvific activity. Healing the man's physical infirmity could alternatively prime therapeutic scripts associated with David, but the prior association of Jesus's therapeutic activity with that of God (rather than David) will probably lead most audience members to a similar conclusion in this episode.<sup>46</sup> For hearers who grasp the gravity of this allusive language, the cry of the bystanders becomes their own: "We have never seen anything like this!"<sup>47</sup>

45 An ancillary effect of this episode would likely be an appreciation among those in the Markan audience for their status as "insiders," even as they marvel together with the bystanders at the authority of the Markan Jesus (1:27). As Yarbro Collins (*Mark*, 174) notes, "the audience knows that this authority is rooted in Jesus's appointment as the messiah and his endowment with the Holy Spirit." Thus, whatever aspects of the characterization of Mark's Jesus are kept concealed from the *characters* in the story, audience members benefit from the disclosure of the identity of Jesus throughout the story. On the rhetorical payoff of disclosing the so-called "messianic secret" to audience members while keeping the matter concealed from characters, see, most recently, Kelly R. Iverson, "'Wherever the Gospel Is Preached': The Paradox of Secrecy in the Gospel of Mark," in *Mark as Story: Retrospect and Prospect*, ed. Kelly R. Iverson and Christopher W. Skinner (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 181–209. See further "To What Ends the Rhetoric of Inference?" in Chapter Seven below.

46 See above on 1:21–28. Cf. Gernsbacher and Kaschak, "Text Comprehension," 462–74.

47 So also Bolt, *Jesus' Defeat of Death*, 104.

**“Your Sins are Forgiven!” (2:5)**

The episode begins with an *ekphrastic* (vividly descriptive<sup>48</sup>) recounting of the scene in the synagogue where a group of people have broken through the roof in order to ensure that their friend is seen by the man who caused such a stir in Capernaum only a little while earlier (2:1–4; cf. 1:23–27). When this faithful group comes face to face with the Markan Jesus, he offers the following unexpected pronouncement to the paralytic man: τέκνον, ἀφίενταί σου αἱ ἁμαρτία (2:5). The utterance is startling to the characters (and probably those in the audience) because the narrative thus far and the immediate context, have fostered the expectation that the man will be *physically* healed (cf. 1:28–45).<sup>49</sup> While the Markan Jesus continues John’s message (1:4–6) by proclaiming the arrival of the kingdom of God, repentance, and belief in the good news (1:15),<sup>50</sup> the speech act in 2:5 moves beyond *telling about* the possibility of forgiveness to *effecting* that forgiveness. The surprising nature of this disclosure creates a gap for audience members as they grope for understanding since the proclamation demonstrates rather than explains Jesus’s authority to forgive sins.<sup>51</sup> As we have already seen, intentional omission creates gaps that are particularly useful in ancient rhetorical theory since they enhance the persuasive power of the argument by encouraging inference generation.<sup>52</sup> In this case, audience members are meant to ponder how it is that the Markan Jesus is able to forgive sins (see further below on 2:7).

The difficulty that must have been experienced by at least some in the audience seems to have extended to modern scholars, who have too often resisted a straightforward understanding of the narrative in favor of a theocentric reading. Rather than literally effecting forgiveness, scholars such as Joachim Jeremias have understood the line, τέκνον, ἀφίενταί σου αἱ ἁμαρτία, as a *declaration* from the Markan Jesus that *God* has forgiven the sins of the paralytic man.<sup>53</sup> Others, most recently Moloney, Boring, and Beavis, have

48 In ancient rhetorical theory, *ekphrasis* (ἐκφράσις or *descriptio*) is descriptive language designed specifically to vividly portray something in the mind’s eye of audience members. See further Theon, *Prog.* 118; *Rhet. Her.* 4.39.51.

49 So also Bolt, *Jesus’ Defeat of Death*, 103.

50 Presumably, the forgiveness of sins would be part of this message, implied in John’s message of repentance (cf. 1:4–6).

51 Bolt, *Jesus’ Defeat of Death*, 103.

52 E.g., Demetrius, *Eloc.* 222.

53 Joachim Jeremias, *Die Gleichnisse Jesu*, 9th ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977), 122 n. 4; idem, *Neutestamentliche Theologie*, 2nd ed. (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1973), 116.



followed Jeremiah's lead.<sup>54</sup> These scholars understand the passive verb form, ἀφίενται, as a *passivum divinum* with God as the implied agent, such that the scribes distort the words of the Markan Jesus when they accuse him of blasphemy (2:7).<sup>55</sup> However, as Benjamin Pascut (following Otfried Hofius) has recently demonstrated, there is little evidence to support the notion of a *passivum divinum* either here or elsewhere in the Gospel of Mark.<sup>56</sup> Instead of a fixed grammatical "category," any implication that God is the implied subject of a passive verb must come from the context. In this case, however, the context favors the Markan Jesus—not God—as the forgiveness bearer.

If the Markan Jesus is really only *declaring* God's forgiveness, why do we not find him offering a rebuttal in his defense against the slanderous scribes?<sup>57</sup> On the contrary, the narrative seems at pains to emphasize that (in the words of the Markan Jesus), "The Son of Humanity has authority to forgive sins on earth" (2:10).<sup>58</sup> We are thus left following the immediate context of the episode itself, which frames the entire scene around the authority of the Markan Jesus—in this case, the authority to forgive sins. Thus, contrary to the arguments of Jeremiah and others, the scribes do not misunderstand Jesus at all: he really is claiming to be able to forgive sins.

### "Who Can Forgive Sins Except the One God?" (2:7)

If the scribes do not misunderstand the Markan Jesus, but direct the audience toward a correct rendering of the event,<sup>59</sup> what are those in the audience

54 Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2002), 61; Boring, *Mark*, 76; Beavis, *Mark*, 58–59. Cf. Walter Grundmann, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*, THKNT 2 (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1959), 76; William L. Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition, and Notes*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 94 n. 9; Joachim Gnilka, "Das Elend vor dem Menschensohn (Mk 2, 1–12)," in *Jesus und der Menschensohn*, ed. Rudolf Pesch and Rudolf Schnackenburg (Freiburg: Herder, 1975), 196–209, esp. 202; Hugh Anderson, *The Gospel of Mark*, NCB (London: Marshall, Morgan, & Scott, 1976), 100; Robert Guelich, *Mark 1–8:26*, WBC 34A (Waco: Word, 1982), 85–86, 93; Rudolf Pesch, *Das Markusevangelium: Kommentar zu Kap. 1, 1–8, 26*, vol. 1, 2 vols., HTKNT 2 (Freiburg: Herder, 1991), 1:156.

55 Beavis, *Mark*, 58.

56 Benjamin Pascut, "The So-Called *Passivum Divinum* in Mark's Gospel," *NovT* 54 (2012): 313–33. Cf. Otfried Hofius, "Jesu Zuspruch der Sündenvergebung: Exegetische Erwägungen zu Mk 2,5 b," in *Neutestamentliche Studien*, WUNT 132 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 38–56, esp. 50–52.

57 So also Pascut, "*Passivum Divinum*," 325.

58 ἐξουσίαν ἔχει ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἀφίεναι ἁμαρτίας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς (2:10); see further below on 2:10.

59 That is, the line, τίς δύναται ἀφίεναι ἁμαρτίας εἰ μὴ εἰς ὁ θεός; correctly understands that the Markan Jesus is claiming to forgive sins. This objection reflects the scribal

to infer about Mark's Jesus? The scribes object thusly: τί οὗτος οὕτως λαλεῖ; βλασφημεῖ· τίς δύναται ἀφιέναι ἁμαρτίας εἰ μὴ εἷς ὁ θεός; The scribes' complaint that the only one who can forgive sins is the "one God" (εἷς ὁ θεός) would probably activate Deut 6:4–5 LXX for those in the Markan audience saturated in Jewish cultural memory.<sup>60</sup> For these audience members, the Markan Jesus's speech act in 2:5 may call into question the unity of God.<sup>61</sup>

Since the prologue, the Markan Jesus has been characterized using allusive language typically reserved for Yahweh alone (cf. 1:8). However, to this point, everything has been cast in verbal innuendo and allusion. Thus, those in the audience may still feel at least a degree of dissonance from the initial speech act in 2:5 because extant examples of figures other than God forgiving sins are nowhere to be found.<sup>62</sup> For this reason, the implications of the Markan Jesus enacting forgiveness may have been too much for some in the Markan audience to readily integrate. If this were the case, they may well identify with some or all of 2:7: "Who can forgive sins except the one God?!"<sup>63</sup> Thus, John Paul Heil's suggestion that, "the scribes serve as negative examples for the

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misunderstanding that the Markan Jesus cannot actually forgive sins, while simultaneously suggesting to audience members that he must be so linked with Yahweh as to not violate the scribal concern.

60 Marcus, *Mark 1–8*, 222; John R. Donahue and Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark*, SP 2 (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2002), 95.

61 So also Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 185.

62 Daniel Johansson, "Who Can Forgive Sins but God Alone?" Human and Angelic Agents, and Divine Forgiveness in Early Judaism," *JSNT* 33 (2011): 351–74.

63 So also Hartvigsen, *Prepare*, 151; Thomas E. Boomershine, "Audience Address and Purpose in the Performance of Mark," in *Mark as Story: Retrospect and Prospect*, ed. Kelly R. Iverson and Christopher W. Skinner (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 130; Bolt, *Jesus' Defeat of Death*, 103. Further support for audience identification with the scribes in Mark 2:7 comes from Boomershine's performance of the scene found at <http://tinyurl.com/lcb-jm2d> (accessed July 28, 2016). At 1:23, as he utters the words, "Why does this fellow speak in this way? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" two members in the audience can be seen nodding their heads in approval of the scribal concern. These audience members are presumably familiar with the story (and presumably attend the church where the performance was filmed). Therefore, they are unlikely to actually advocate the scribal charge of blasphemy. Yet they empathize with the fact that only the "one God" can forgive sins. It is this empathizing that forms the identification with the scribes, at least in this modern performance. Modern though it may be, the clip underscores that audience members naturally identify with characters in the story. In this case, these audience members identify with the scribes at 2:7.

Markan audience" is only likely for some audience members, but not others.<sup>64</sup> Any audience members who share the values and beliefs of the scribes before the performance will likely share the scribal suspicion of the Markan Jesus. These audience members will be challenged by the coming demonstration of the authority of Mark's Jesus in the same way the scribes themselves are (cf. 2:8–11).<sup>65</sup>

As audience members struggle for the answer to the scribal question, several factors may push these listeners toward selecting the assimilation of the Markan Jesus to Yahweh. First, in both the first-century world and the story world of Mark's Gospel blasphemy was not understood merely as, "slandering or cursing God,"<sup>66</sup> but as usurping the authority of the God of Israel as one's own (cf. 14:61–64).<sup>67</sup> This understanding of blasphemy is supported by its usage here in 2:7, where the question in 2:7b informs the blasphemy charge (as it does in 14:61–64). The scribal logic in the episode runs thusly: (A) only God can forgive sins; (B) Jesus just claimed to forgive a person's sins; (C) Jesus is not God; therefore, (D) Jesus is guilty of blasphemy. This context of blasphemy works together with the emphasis on the oneness of God such that the question placed on the lips of the scribes in Mark 2:7 would very likely activate scripts associated with the *Shema* (Deut 6:4 LXX) in the minds of listeners saturated in Jewish tradition.<sup>68</sup>

Second, elsewhere Mark's Gospel seems to complicate Yahweh's oneness by the assimilation of Mark's Jesus to Yahweh via *emphasis* and an abundance of other allusive language.<sup>69</sup> Third, the strong association here may cue those hints from the prologue and the testimony of the unclean spirits that joined Mark's Jesus to God.<sup>70</sup> Fourth, the fact that the Markan Jesus "perceived in his spirit" (2:8) that scribes were speaking thusly might activate those scripts and

64 As Joanna Dewey has rightly pointed out, the hostility between "the scribes" (as a whole) is only now just beginning. See Joanna Dewey, *Markan Public Debate: Literary Technique, Concentric Structure, and Theology in Mark 2:1–3:6*, SBLDS 48 (Chico, Calif.: Scholars, 1979), 72–74.

65 Hartvigsen, *Prepare*, 151.

66 Beavis, *Mark*, 58.

67 Adela Yarbro Collins, "The Charge of Blasphemy in Mark 14.64," *JSNT* 26 (2004): 379–401; Darrell L. Bock, *Blasphemy and Exaltation in Judaism and the Final Examination of Jesus: A Philological-Historical Study of the Key Jewish Themes Impacting Mark 14:61–64*, WUNT 2/106 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998). Cf. Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 185.

68 Indeed, the scene, as a whole, is evocative of the early Jewish-Christian debates over the possibility of two powers in heaven. Marcus, *Mark* 1–8, 222.

69 Cf., e.g., Mark 1:3, 7; 4:35–41; 5:19–20; 6:47–52; 12:28–37.

70 Cf. Mark 1:1, 3, 7–8, 10–11, 12–13, 24.

schemas from the Jewish Scriptures where Yahweh knows the thoughts and intentions of humans.<sup>71</sup> In short, the strongly allusive language and *emphasis* saturating the scene suggest that, for many in the Markan audience, the characterization of Mark's Jesus continues to work its way into the schemas and scripts associated with God.<sup>72</sup> To state that the Markan Jesus is characterized as divine in this scene does not overstate the matter.

As intriguing as these suggestions may be, they are left unattended in the narrative, and listeners are left to ponder the ambiguity as they struggle to understand how the Markan Jesus relates to the oneness of God; while hints are present, they remain only that. Yet the question from the scribes does offer the Markan audience one potential vantage point from which to evaluate the surprising speech of Jesus (2:5b).<sup>73</sup> While the opinion of the scribes is no doubt suspect, since they are already set against Jesus,<sup>74</sup> the question is nevertheless helpful rhetorically in that it further prepares audience members to leap the gap created by both Jesus's pronouncement and the scribal question itself.<sup>75</sup> This gap, however, is only compounded as they listen to the Markan Jesus's response to the private scribal discussion of blasphemy.

*"The Son of Humanity has Authority to Forgive Sins on Earth" (2:10)*

Once Jesus perceives the scribal consternation in his s/Spirit,<sup>76</sup> he confronts them with the following questions: τί ταῦτα διαλογίζεσθε ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν; τί ἐστὶν εὐκοπώτερον, εἰπεῖν τῷ παραλυτικῷ· ἀφίενταί σου αἱ ἁμαρτίαι, ἢ εἰπεῖν· ἔγειρε καὶ ἄρον τὸν κράβαττόν σου καὶ περιπάτει; (2:8–9). These questions engender audience participation by inviting reflection on which act would be easier.

71 E.g., Ps 138:23 LXX; Prov 24:12 LXX. See also Pesch, *Markusevangelium*, 1:159.

72 Marcus (*Mark* 1–8, 222) suggests that this episode highlights the “near-divinity” and “more-than-human” status of Mark's Jesus. For a full-length study on the link between extending forgiveness of sins and “divine identity” in Mark 2:1–12, particularly within first-century Judaism, see Benjamin Pascut, “Forgiveness and Divine Identity in Judaism and Mk 2:1–12” (Ph.D. diss., University of Cambridge, 2013). Working from the perspective of social identity theory, Pascut argues at length that Mark 2:1–12 portrays Jesus as both the forgiver of sins and one who subsequently shares in the divine identity once reserved for Yahweh alone.

73 Bolt, *Jesus' Defeat of Death*, 103.

74 Cf. Mark 1:22.

75 Bolt, *Jesus' Defeat of Death*, 103.

76 Given the emphasis in the Markan narrative on Jesus as a Spirit-possessed man (1:9–11; cf. 1:23–27), it is difficult to ignore a hint of the activity of the Spirit possessing him in the perception of the dialogue of the scribes in the words, καὶ εὐθὺς ἐπιγνοὺς ὁ Ἰησοῦς τῷ πνεύματι αὐτοῦ ὅτι οὕτως διαλογίζονται ἐν ἑαυτοῖς (2:8).

If Jesus's authority to forgive sins is in question, then he will perform a more difficult speech act (or at least one where its effectiveness is immediately evident); his power to heal will validate his power to forgive sins.<sup>77</sup> The group had originally brought the paralytic to the Markan Jesus for healing (2:3), and they are about to receive just that.

The Markan Jesus introduces the speech act with a line that puzzles characters (and presumably audience members): ἵνα δὲ εἰδῇτε ὅτι ἐξουσίαν ἔχει ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἀφιεῖν ἁμαρτίας ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς (2:10a). First, the title ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου is exceptionally ambiguous, since it is open to a variety of interpretations. If schemas and scripts stemming from Dan 7:13 LXX and related Jewish traditions are activated, hearers may think of an eschatological figure like the one found in the *Parables of Enoch*.<sup>78</sup> Alternatively, the utterance may be heard as a Greek (mis)translation of the Semitic idiom for “a human being” (lit. a son of humanity)<sup>79</sup> (בן אדם in Hebrew and בר נשא or בר נש in Aramaic), or simply as a modest self-referential, “this man” or “I.”<sup>80</sup>

77 Cf. Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 186.

78 The most provocative stream of Jewish tradition regarding the “Son of Humanity” flows from Daniel 7:13 LXX to texts like the *Parables of Enoch* (1 *Enoch* 37–71) and 4 *Ezra* 13. While the date of the *Parables* is contested, a growing number of scholars are shifting the date from the second to the first century CE. This text features a divine intermediary figure, known as the “Righteous/Elect One” and the “Son of Humanity,” who sits on the throne of the Lord of Spirits and judges the wicked and vindicates the righteous. He does not, however, extend forgiveness like we see in Mark 2:5. Instead, “mercy” is shown upon the righteous via the Lord of Spirits himself. Cf. 1 *En.* 45:3; 45:6; 46:1–8; 48:1–10; 50:1–5. On the date of the *Parables*, see most recently, James H. Charlesworth, “The Date and Provenience of the *Parables of Enoch*,” in *Parables of Enoch: A Paradigm Shift*, ed. James H. Charlesworth and Darrell L. Bock (London; New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 37–57. For a survey of scholarship on the date of the *Parables*, the most comprehensive and recent treatment is Darrell L. Bock, “Dating the *Parables of Enoch*: A Forschungsbericht,” in *Parables of Enoch: A Paradigm Shift*, ed. James H. Charlesworth and Darrell L. Bock (London; New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 58–113. For a treatment of the possibility of historical influence of the *Parables* on the Gospel of Mark, see most recently James D. G. Dunn, “The Son of Man in Mark,” in *Parables of Enoch: A Paradigm Shift*, ed. James H. Charlesworth and Darrell L. Bock (London; New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 18–34. Dunn prudently finds the chances of a direct influence unlikely.

79 This interpretation is common in recent scholarship; the most robust defense is Maurice Casey, *The Solution to the “Son of Man” Problem*, LNTS 343 (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2007), esp. 144–67. Cf. Barnabas Lindars, *Jesus, Son of Man: A Fresh Examination of the Son of Man Sayings in the Gospels in the Light of Recent Research* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 44–47.

80 Geza Vermes, “The Use of בר נשא/בר נש in Jewish Aramaic,” in *An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1967), 310–30, esp. 311–19; “The ‘Son of Man’ Debate,” *JSNNT* 1 (1978): 19–32, esp. 20.

This self-referential rendering is sometimes disputed because, in each example Geza Vermes sets forth, the speaker is readily included in a general statement about human beings. On the other hand, a Danielic reference and a Semitic idiom have much to commend themselves. Indeed, as Yarbrow Collins has argued, if sayings like the one found in 2:10 can be traced back to the historical Jesus, then what began as a general statement about humanity has been interpreted eschatologically in the Gospel of Mark with reference to the Danielic “Son of Humanity.”<sup>81</sup>

Regardless of whether audience members will be able to untangle a Greek translation of a Semitic idiom, the Greek title itself will most likely be experienced against whatever scripts and schemas listeners initially, even unconsciously, associate with the epithet. Moreover, the title—and audience interpretations of it—will likewise be incorporated into the growing characterization of Mark’s Jesus based on the hints and insinuations from the preceding narrative. Further, as the narrative moves forward so too will the “Son of Humanity” be fleshed out by the story itself, and this development will be in keeping with the schemas and scripts associated with Daniel.

Thus, while the phrase will become more familiar as the narrative moves forward—indeed, the narrative will shape the meaning of the title as it progresses, eventually aligning it with the Danielic tradition (14:62)—it is rather odd at this early stage.<sup>82</sup> For this reason, the sudden, though bare, assertion that the Markan Jesus is the Son of Humanity creates a gap for hearers. Further, the bold declaration that, as this “Son of Humanity” (the Markan Jesus) has the authority to forgive sins on earth introduces added dissonance. Even in the “Son of Man” traditions associated with an eschatological figure in texts like Daniel 7:13 LXX and *Parables of Enoch*,<sup>83</sup> the figure is a judge, not a bringer of forgiveness.<sup>84</sup> Moreover, as we have already seen, the authority to forgive sins was widely believed to belong solely to the God of Israel.

This gap is exacerbated by the potential for *emphasis*, which capitalizes on the ambiguity created by the fact that, for audience members familiar with Jewish schemas and scripts derived from the LXX, the identification of the Markan Jesus as *the* “Son of Humanity” in 2:10 could possibly function initially as a modest (or puzzling) self-reference or general statement about humanity and, on a deeper level, an insinuation that he shares the closest possible association with (or assimilation to) Yahweh. Some in the audience familiar with similar traditions about Jesus or another eschatological Son of Humanity may

81 Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 187–89.

82 Cf. Mark 2:28; 8:31, 38; 9:9, 12, 31; 10:33, 45; 13:26; 14:21, 41, 62.

83 E.g., 1 *Enoch* 45:3; 46:4–6; 50:1–5.

84 So also Marcus, *Mark* 1–8, 223.



pick up on this use of *emphasis* now, or perhaps they will make the connection in 2:28 where the narrative insinuates that this “Son of Humanity” is the “Lord” (κύριος). For others, this particular gap will not be cleared until the passion, where Dan 7:13 LXX is evoked in the final “Son of Humanity” saying.<sup>85</sup> At this point, however, the narrative is opaque save for those already prepared to hear the “Son of Humanity” saying in a certain manner.

The anacoluthon (unexpected break in speech) formed by the change in person from 2:10a to 2:10b has led to considerable discussion as to whether 2:10a addresses the scribes or the audience.<sup>86</sup> Camile Focant has recently argued that there is not adequate justification for audience address since the audience or lector is not singled out explicitly, as the “reader” is in 13:14 (ὁ ἀναγινώσκων νοεῖτω).<sup>87</sup> However, leaving the speaker omitted (and, by extension, the particular character/person addressed) is an established figure of speech in ancient rhetorical theory. This figure, known as *detractio/ellipsis*, aimed at both novelty and brevity by leaving unspecified the speaker in a particular line(s) of discourse.<sup>88</sup> Thus, the fact that there are no explicit indicators of a shift in speaker or audience (save perhaps for the change in number in 2:10b) does not necessarily work against audience address at this point. Rather, it would facilitate a subtle inclusion of the audience, some of whom would be identifying at least to some degree with the scribes (see above), in the dialogue traditionally seen to only be addressed to the scribes. In fact, during a public reading, it would be quite plausible that the lector might foster reflection in the audience by engaging them in the midst of speaking Jesus’s lines to the scribes in 2:9–10, especially since the line between characters and audience is already quite thin,

85 See Chapter Six below.

86 For those in favor of some form of audience address, see, e.g., Boomershine, “Audience Address,” 126; Bolt, *Jesus’ Defeat of Death*, 103–04; Bas M. F. van Iersel, *Mark: A Reader-Response Commentary*, LNTS 164 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 149; Lewis S. Hay, “The Son of Man in Mark 2:10 and 2:28,” *JBL* 89 (1970): 69–75; Christian P. Ceroke, “Is Mark 2, 10 a Saying of Jesus?,” *CBQ* 22 (1960): 369–90; G. H. Boobyer, “Mark II, 10a and the Interpretation of the Healing of the Paralytic,” *HTR* 47 (1954): 115–20. For those who read 2:10 as addressing only the scribes, see, e.g., Focant, *Mark*, 96; Mary Ann Tolbert, *Sowing the Gospel: Mark’s Work in Literary-Historical Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 136 n. 18.

87 Focant, *Mark*, 96. Similarly, Tolbert (*Sowing the Gospel*, 136 n. 18) complains of “no grammatical or textual justification for positing a break between v. 9 and 10a,” and instead suggests that viewing the verse as reflecting a different level of narration provides a more satisfactory explanation.

88 See Quintilian, *Inst.* 9.2.37, which discusses the combination of the figures of *detraction/ellipsis* and *prosopopoeia*, with the result that “what is left out is who was talking.”



and at least some in the audience have already found on the lips of the scribes their own question about the divine prerogative of forgiveness (2:7).<sup>89</sup>

Given the close identification of at least some in the audience with the scribes during this episode,<sup>90</sup> it is noteworthy that studies in cognitive science involving audience identification suggest that those in the audience identifying with the scribal objection would be predisposed to hear the words as though directed toward them (as side-participants), without the lector needing to shift to an off-stage focus in order to include them directly.<sup>91</sup> This sort of audience identification is often based on perceived shared experiences or other similarities and is supported by Keith Oatley's theory of *mimesis* whereby audience members simulate the story world cognitively in order to experience and comprehend it.<sup>92</sup> This mental re-creation of the narrative places listeners within the narrative world itself as they witness and sometimes even participate in the story.<sup>93</sup> Thus, when a character with whom a listener strongly identifies is addressed she or he may hear the line as directed (even if only partially or unconsciously) toward them, regardless of whether the line was "meant" to address them. While it is unnecessary for the main argument whether some experienced 2:10a as audience address, the arguments seem compelling. For audience members who found themselves in the Markan Jesus's address, the dissonance created by the opacity already present would be heightened all the more as they consider how it is that Jesus can forgive sins on earth.

Regardless of how one understands 2:10, the discussion above highlights a gap for audience members, who are encouraged to understand the meaning of

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89 See above. Bolt, *Jesus' Defeat of Death*, 103.

90 This notwithstanding the fact that the scribes would be suspect in the eyes of the Markan audience since their authority has already been set over against the Markan Jesus by this point in the narrative (cf. 1:22). For the audience to identify with the question on the lips of the scribes does not imply that they would likewise identify with any other aspect of the scribes, or even that they would identify with the scribes in subsequent episodes.

91 Cf. Keith Oatley, "A Taxonomy of the Emotions of Literary Response and a Theory of Identification in Fictional Narrative," *Poetics* 23 (1994): 53–74; Michael D. Slater, "Entertainment Education and the Persuasive Impact of Narratives," in *Narrative Impact: Social and Cognitive Foundations*, ed. Melanie C. Green, Jeffrey J. Strange, and Timothy C. Brock (Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2002), 157–81.

92 Oatley, "A Taxonomy," 66. This experience of the narrative is buoyed by what Tan has referred to as the *diegetic* effect whereby the narrative world of a movie or performance invades the audience's experiential world during the performance and envelopes the audience. The result is a subtle incorporation of the audience into the story world. See Ed S. Tan, "Film-Induced Affect as a Witness Emotion," *Poetics* 23 (1994): 10–13.

93 See further Hartvigsen, *Prepare*, 75–82.

the line as explicitly affirming that the Markan Jesus possesses the authority to forgive sins. This authority is demonstrated in the speech act that follows. Turning to the paralyzed man just as before, the Markan Jesus commands: ἔγειρε ἄρον τὸν κράβαττόν σου καὶ ὑπάγε εἰς τὸν οἶκόν σου (2:11). The efficacy of Jesus's words becomes immediately apparent as the once-paralytic man does exactly as he is told. The internal logic is clear: just as the Markan Jesus's words effect healing in 2:11, so too did they bring about forgiveness in 2:5.<sup>94</sup> The fact that the mysterious epithet, "Son of Humanity," is introduced in 2:10, where we have an implicit affirmation of the divine authority of the Markan Jesus, should not be overlooked. Indeed, as we shall see as the narrative unfolds, these so-called "Son of Humanity" sayings disclose the authority of the Markan Jesus, while keeping the fullness of his status as the *kyriotic* Son concealed.<sup>95</sup>

By itself, the portrait of Mark's Jesus as healer may activate any number of scripts associated with healers in the Mediterranean world. However, the context and wording of the episode narrow the associated schemas and scripts. David's son was believed to possess therapeutic powers in the first century.<sup>96</sup> Indeed, apart from Solomon, the Davidic messiah was expected to shepherd and feed the sheep, strengthen the weak, heal the sick, bind up the limbs of the crippled, retrieve the straying, and find the lost.<sup>97</sup> However, there is no explicit

94 So also van Iersel, *Mark*, 150.

95 Similarly, Harry L. Chronis, "To Reveal and to Conceal: A Literary-Critical Perspective on in Mark," *NTS* 51 (2005): 459–81. Chronis sets the "Son of Man" sayings against the Markan Jesus's identity as the "Son of God," arguing that the "Son of Man" sayings function in the narrative to conceal the *person* of Jesus while simultaneously disclosing his *work*. However, Chronis places too much emphasis on the title, "Son of God," rather than the entire narrative portrait of the Markan Jesus, based on both words and deeds.

96 Cf. *L.A.B.* 60:3; Josephus, *Ant.* 8.2.5 §§45–49. See also, the entirety of T. Sol. See further Duling, "Solomon, Exorcism," 235–53; Chilton, "Jesus Ben David," 88–112; Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 152; Le Donne, *Historiographical Jesus*, 137–83; Marcus, *Mark* 8–16, 119–20. Healing may also be associated with the Davidic messiah in 4Q521. The other option is that the Lord himself does the healing. For a Davidic prophetic messiah as the healer, see John J. Collins, "The Works of the Messiah," *DSD* 1 (1994): 98–112; Le Donne, *Historiographical Jesus*, 142–46. For Yahweh himself as the healer, see Novakovic, *Messiah*, 169–79; idem, "4Q521: The Works of the Messiah or the Signs of the Messianic Time?," in *Qumran Studies: New Approaches, New Questions*, ed. Michael T. Davis and Brent A. Strawn (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 208–31.

97 Ezek 34 (esp. vv. 19–31; cf. 37:24–28) LXX. See further Charles H. Talbert, *Matthew*, Paideia (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 31. On the Davidic shepherd motif in the Hebrew scriptures and Second Temple Jewish tradition, see Young S. Chae, *Jesus as the Eschatological Davidic Shepherd: Studies in the Old Testament, Second Temple Judaism, and in the Gospel of Matthew*, WUNT 2/216 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 19–172.

Davidic designation in Mark 2:1–12, and, while the fact that the Markan Jesus heals the man of his paralysis may well initially activate these and related scripts for certain audience members, the nearer script is the one already set in place by Jesus's forgiveness of the paralyzed man's sins. Indeed, since the schemas and scripts associated with God-as-forgiver and God-as-healer have already been activated in the immediate and preceeding context, the majority in the audience will probably settle on Jesus as embodying God's own healing activity at this stage.<sup>98</sup> If Jesus's (divine) prerogative to forgive sins—which cannot be seen with the eye—is legitimated by healing of the same man's infirmities—which can be witnessed by the eye—then it stands to reason that the two actions (forgiving and healing) are linked. Audience members picking up on this narrative connection will be encouraged to infer that Jesus forgives through the same divine power by which he heals. The notion that Yahweh himself would heal is ubiquitous in canonical and archival Jewish cultural memory. Thus, the insinuations that Jesus acts in his place at this point would be difficult for sensitized audience members to miss.<sup>99</sup>

### *Emotional Response from the Bystanders (2:12)*

Given what we have seen above regarding the invitation to audience participation through narrative ambiguity and gaps, along with the questions posed before the audience in 2:7–9, the emotional response from the crowd will likely mirror that of the Markan audience: οὕτως οὐδέποτε εἶδομεν. While some listeners first identified with the question of the scribes, now at the scene's end, those in the audience who have managed to come to terms with Mark's Jesus as the enactor of forgiveness will identify with “everyone” (πάντας) who was amazed and glorified God. These audience members who are able to countenance the similarity between Mark's Jesus and God here will likely be amazed at the perplexing portrait of the Markan Jesus whose characterization so encroaches on schemas and scripts associated with Yahweh that he is authorized to forgive sins at his own discretion. From where that authority comes

98 When it comes to non-consciously sorting out what meanings to assign a word via a schema or script, it “has been shown that the contextually inappropriate meanings of the word are quickly dampened; activation of inappropriate meanings seem to decay within around 750 msec from the processing of the word” (Gernsbacher and Kaschak, “Text Comprehension,” 468). On the reliability of selection and suppression of activated scripts and schemas in sense making, see Morton Ann Gernsbacher and Mark Faust, “Skilled Suppression,” in *Interference and Inhibition in Cognition*, ed. F. N. Dempster and C. N. Brainerd (San Diego, CA: Academic Press, 1995), 295–327.

99 See, e.g., Isa 6:10; 7:4; 19:22; 30:26; 57:18–19 LXX. Likewise, the servant of Yahweh is depicted as mediating this healing in Isa 61:1 LXX. See also, Ezek. Trag. 5:1; T. Zeb. 9:8; Pr Man 1:16.

is left unspecified until 11:27–33, where its divine origin is implied. Even so, at this early stage, the only plausible answer is, “from God.” It is worth highlighting that while the Markan Jesus himself is the one from whom the forgiveness is issued,<sup>100</sup> the crowd glorifies God amidst their amazement. Some, such as Marcus, Moloney, and Malbon, have suggested that this point further supports the notion that God, not the Markan Jesus, is the one responsible for the forgiveness.<sup>101</sup> However, while God is clearly the ultimate source of the forgiveness that the Markan Jesus offers (cf. 1:10), 2:10 makes explicit that the prerogative belongs to Mark’s Jesus, who forgives based on his own choosing. Viewed from this perspective, the crowd’s response in 2:12, just as the whole of 2:1–12, instead highlights the assimilation of Mark’s Jesus to Yahweh.<sup>102</sup>

### “The Son of Humanity is Lord” (Mark 2:23–28)

After the episode at the house in Capernaum, the Markan Jesus demonstrates the forgiveness that he offers through his association with “sinners”—those whose social class, behavior, or both, placed them outside the boundaries set by the Jewish religious establishment of the day (2:13–17). His association with “sinners” caused much consternation for the scribes, who subsequently questioned him about matters of fasting (2:18–22) and (in our current scene) working on the Sabbath (2:23–28). In what follows, the focus is on what this episode communicates about the characterization of Mark’s Jesus as the *kyriotic* Son.

We rejoin the story as Jesus walks through the grainfields on a Sabbath. Controversy strikes when the Pharisees catch his disciples plucking heads of grain, which amounted to working rather than observing the mandated Sabbath rest (2:23–24).<sup>103</sup> In defense of his disciples, the Markan Jesus brings forth David as an ancient witness, whose own deeds form a testimony on their behalf and demonstrate no wrongdoing on the group’s part. The Markan Jesus is cast as a skilled expert in law, questioning the scribes so as to (in the language

100 This key point has been the focus of the recent work of Pascut, “Forgiveness and Divine Identity.”

101 Marcus, *Mark 1–8*, 223–24; Moloney, *Mark*, 63. Cf. Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, *Mark’s Jesus: Characterization as Narrative Christology* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2009), 200.

102 Similarly, Joachim Gnilka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*, 2 vols., EKKNT 2 (Neukirchen: Neukirchener, 1978), 1:102.

103 See LXX Gen 2:2; Exod 20:8–11; 31:12–17; 35:2; Deut 5:12–15; Num 15:32–36.

of Demetrius) “force [the Pharisees] into a sort of corner, so that [they] seem cross-examined and unable to reply.”<sup>104</sup>

Jesus retorts, “Haven’t you read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need of food?” (2:25)<sup>105</sup> He then recounts the event in detail, even if he has substantially altered the story as reflected in the LXX,<sup>106</sup> and rests his case in a memorable way by drawing a forceful conclusion from a proverb: τὸ σάββατον διὰ τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐγένετο καὶ οὐχ ὁ ἄνθρωπος διὰ τὸ σάββατον· ὥστε κύριός ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ τοῦ σαββάτου (2:27–28). The logic runs thusly: if the Sabbath was made for humanity *in general* (τὸ σάββατον διὰ τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐγένετο), then the *Son of Humanity* ought to have authority (κύριός ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου) over the Sabbath. The nearest script comes from the preceding narrative, where Mark’s Jesus was depicted as the one who, like the one God, can cast out unclean spirits, forgive sins, and heal the infirmed (cf. 1:21–28; 2:1–12).<sup>107</sup> Only moments later, in this episode, the Son of Humanity is likened initially to David and then, climactically, to Yahweh as κύριος.

With the Davidic connection secure, the Markan Jesus now insinuates a remarkable station for himself, that he himself is κύριος. On the surface, he has merely identified himself (ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου) as master (κύριος) over the Sabbath (τοῦ σαββάτου). However, the term, κύριος, which has already been used to forge a *synkristic* relationship between Mark’s Jesus and Yahweh (cf. 1:3), creates a pregnant ambiguity that the narrative exploits through *emphasis*. For the privileged audience, whose position within the narrative has been elevated above characters like these Pharisees, the foregoing narrative suggests that there is much more to the line, κύριός ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ τοῦ σαββάτου, than appearances might first indicate.

The polyvalency of the term κύριος, the distance between κύριος, and the genitival clause τοῦ σαββάτου, which is likewise separated by an ascensive καί, all create a loaded construction that is exploited by the narrative through

104 Demetrius, *Eloc.* 277.

105 οὐδέποτε ἀνέγνωτε τί ἐποίησεν Δαυὶδ ὅτε χρεῖαν ἔσχεν καὶ ἐπεινάσεν αὐτὸς καὶ οἱ μετ’ αὐτοῦ.

106 In 1 Sam 21 LXX, David asks the priest for some of the bread of the Presence placed before the Lord in the sanctuary at Nob, which he receives upon the condition that he and his men are ritually pure. In the Markan account, David and his men entered the house of God and ate, in violation of the commandment that only the priests were to eat the bread in this manner.

107 Alternatively, for those in the audience whose ears are primed to hear Dan 7:13 LXX, the argument works as a *qal-waḥomer*, asserting that what works for mere humans should be all the more true for the one who bears the enigmatic title, “the Son of Humanity.” However, even here, the proximity of 2:1–12 to 2:23–28 would overshadow scripts associated with the LXX.

rhetorical *emphasis*. The polyvalency of κύριος makes room for *emphasis*, especially for those in the audience who experience the episode from the perspective of the prologue, where the Markan Jesus was first linked to Yahweh through *emphasis* via κύριος (1:3). Indeed, this is the first use of κύριος since 1:3, and this link—together with the focus on the Markan Jesus's assimilation to Yahweh in 1:21–28 and 2:1–12—is suggestive that audience members would make a similar inference based on the use of κύριος here in 2:28. The qualifier that the Markan Jesus is the Lord *even* over the Sabbath co-opts *Yahweh's* lordship and extends the lordship of *Mark's Jesus* beyond the Sabbath.<sup>108</sup> It is well established in Jewish cultural memory that Yahweh alone exerts full authority over the Sabbath.<sup>109</sup> Who else could be lord over the final day that God made but the Lord? In Mark's Gospel, however, this position of authority belongs to the Markan Jesus.<sup>110</sup>

Thus, on the level of the story, the Markan Jesus is the Son of Humanity, who possesses authority *even* over the Sabbath, as its "lord." This line of interpretation fits quite well within the narrative flow, which has focused on challenges to the Markan Jesus's authority. But for sympathetic audience members tracking the hints thus far, the use of κύριος once again assimilates the Markan Jesus to the God of Israel (cf. 2:28).<sup>111</sup> While the focus on the Sabbath

108 Similarly, Boring, *Mark*, 91.

109 The Sabbath is kept for the "Lord" (κύριος) in LXX Exod 16:23, 25; 20:10; 31:13; 35:2; Lev 19:3, 30; 23:3, 38; 26:2; Deut 5:14; Isa 56:4, 6; Ezek 20:12–24; 22:8, 26; 23:38; 44:24.

110 Daniel Johansson, "Kyrios in the Gospel of Mark," *JSNT* 33 (2010): 112.

111 It is not without import that the episode uses testimony from *David* to characterize the Markan Jesus in terms reserved for Yahweh. Indeed, this will not be the only time the narrative makes recourse to the great king of Jewish cultural memory to support the *kyriot* characterization (cf. 12:35–37). This testimony justifies the deeds of the Markan Jesus by the deeds of David. The subtle comparison between the two figures strengthens the bonds already formed through allusive language from the prologue (1:1, 9–11). Jesus's exorcistic (1:23–27; 1:29–34; 1:40–45) and healing (2:1–12) activity may have likewise activated Davidic scripts for some—even if those primed or activated scripts were suppressed in favor of God-scripts (see above). The ancient rhetoricians were adamant that one should not make everything explicit for one's audience; doing so, ironically, diminished the rhetorical payoff (cf. Demetrius, *Eloc.* 104; 222; 243). Thus, Achtemeier's objection that there is no explicit Davidic link offered by the narrator in 2:23–28 misses the rhetorical benefit of the rhetoric of inference, which has been exploited since the prologue. See Paul J. Achtemeier, "And He Followed Him": Miracles and Discipleship in Mark 10:46–52," *Semeia* 11 (1978): 115–45; esp. 128–29. Similarly, Boring (*Mark*, 91) has asserted, "Mark's Christology has no Davidic typology and is extremely cautious about interpreting Jesus in Davidic terms [...], so Mark does not base his argument on the pattern 'something greater than David is here.'" Cf. Malbon, *Mark's Jesus*, 159–69; William R. Telford, *The*



supports the story-level focus on authority, it also strengthens the force of the latent affirmation of the *kyriotic* dimensions of the characterization of the Markan Jesus.<sup>112</sup>

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*Theology of the Gospel of Mark*, New Testament Theology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 30–41. On the contrary, we have seen that audience members will have already opted for God-scripts over Davidic-scripts; indeed, the narrative would seem at pains to communicate that “something greater than David is here.” While I engage this view more fully below on 10:46–52 and 12:35–37, at this point, it must suffice to say that Boring and others have focused too strongly on the specific title, “son of David,” which has led to a misreading of the overall narrative portrait of the Markan Jesus. Far from avoiding Davidic elements, the global characterization of Mark’s Jesus is reminiscent of, even if exceeding, those schemas and scripts associated with David. For his part, Jakob Naluparayil sets “Son of Man’s Christhood” over against the “Davidic Christhood” in this episode. However, there is no justification from the context to take this particular *synkris-tic* narrative in support of an encomium-invective comparison between Mark’s Jesus and David. To the contrary, Jesus may be greater than David in the story world of Mark, but the comparison associates the two figures in a manner that does not disparage David, but rather uses associated schemas and scripts to fill out Jesus’s characterization and justify his behavior (cf. 1:1, 10). See Jacob Chacko Naluparayil, *The Identity of Jesus in Mark: An Essay on Narrative Christology* (Jerusalem: Franciscan, 2000), 320.

- 112 There remains the possibility that those in the audience particularly attuned to Jewish scripts may, as Marcus (*Mark* 1–8, 246) has argued, hear in the language of the “Son of Humanity” the primordial context of Gen 1–3 upon which Dan 7:13 LXX is dependent. If this were the case, it would likely seem appropriate that, since the Sabbath was a divine gift to the first Adam, his eschatological counterpart would likewise exercise sovereignty over it. Further support would come from the fact that some members of the audience will potentially have had imagery from Gen 1–2 LXX triggered in 1:12–13 where the Markan Jesus was “with the wild animals” (see further Chapter Three above). While some may indeed hear echoes of Genesis, we have already seen that such complex recall is largely muted in the oral/aural experience of a performance. Retrospective inference from the unrelenting performance makes the details increasingly more difficult to recall the further removed one gets from a particular episode within the narrative. Cf. Gernsbacher and Faust, “Skilled Suppression,” 295–327; Gernsbacher and Kaschak, “Text Comprehension,” 467–73. In any case, the possibility cannot be ruled out, even if it is deemed relatively unlikely to be widely experienced, if at all. See further on “Aural vs. Visual Narrative Experience” in Chapter Two above. See also, David C. Rubin, *Memory in Oral Traditions: The Cognitive Psychology of Epic, Ballads, and Counting-out Rhymes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 147; Robert J. Sternberg, *Cognitive Psychology* (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, 2009), 178; Cynthia Edenburg, “Intertextuality, Literary Competence and the Question of Readership: Some Preliminary Observations,” *JSOT* 35 (2010): 131–48. Cf. Kelly R. Iverson, “An Enemy of the Gospel? Anti-Paulinisms and Intertextuality in the Gospel of Matthew,” in *Unity and Diversity in the Gospels and Paul: Essays in Honor*



Therefore this so-called Sabbath controversy turns out to be much more about christology than is sometimes reckoned.<sup>113</sup> Through the tools of *testimonia*, *emphasis*, and allusive language, the *kyriotic* dimensions of the characterization of Mark's Jesus find further support through the testimonies of both David and Jesus himself. However, since the testimony found in 2:28 utilizes *emphasis* rather than a straightforward assertion, there remains the potential for gaps for some audience members, who do not follow the insinuation of divine aspects of the characterization of Mark's Jesus. Questions will likely persist for some, especially those who have not made similar inferences in previous episodes, whereas those with prior exposure to the Gospel may make the connection now in anticipation of what is to come (see below). As Moloney puts it: "As in all good narratives, the story promises that all questions will be answered . . . later."<sup>114</sup>

### Further Testimony from Unclean Spirits (Mark 3:7–12)

Mark 3:7–12 will only receive brief comment, given its similarity to 1:9–11 and 1:21–28. The scene is reminiscent of the crowds flooding in from Judea and Jerusalem for John's baptism, followed by testimony given to the sonship of Mark's Jesus (σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱὸς μου ὁ ἀγαπητός, ἐν σοὶ εὐδόκησα) (cf. 1:11–11).<sup>115</sup> In 3:7–12, the crowds flock in from all around the surrounding region, (this time for healing) and the scene draws to a close with another testimony to the characterization of Mark's Jesus as the Son of God (σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ). Once more, the Markan Jesus is portrayed in therapeutic terms, activities that audience members ought to have already associated with Jesus's *synkristic* relationship with Yahweh (cf. 1:21–28; 2:1–12).<sup>116</sup>

Whenever the unclean spirits see him, they fall down before him and scream out his true identity in one final attempt for control: σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ (3:11).<sup>117</sup>

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of Frank J. Matera, ed. Christopher W. Skinner and Kelly R. Iverson, SBLCL 7 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), 26–31.

113 So also Moloney, *Mark*, 68; Guelich, *Mark 1–8:26*, 114–16.

114 Moloney, *Mark*, 70.

115 Beavis, *Mark*, 65.

116 Recall from the discussions above on 1:21–28 and 2:1–12 that even those for whom Davidic therapeutic scripts are activated will be encouraged to settle (even if unconsciously) on schemas and scripts associated with God as healer. See further, Gernsbacher and Faust, "Skilled Suppression," 295–327; Gernsbacher and Kaschak, "Text Comprehension," 467–73.

117 As in 1:23–27, note the contrast between the *unclean* spirits and the Spirit by which the Markan Jesus performs these therapeutic acts. Similarly, Beavis, *Mark*, 65.

Just as when the unclean spirits tried to control the Markan Jesus in 1:24, he remains unaffected, but instead sternly warns them not to make him known (3:12),<sup>118</sup> since, in Mark's story world, "it is not the demons who are to make known the true identity of Jesus."<sup>119</sup> Be that as it may, the words of the unclean spirits form another testimony for audience members, hailing the Markan Jesus as the Son of God. If this acclamation activates earlier testimonies to Jesus's sonship, then the accompanying *kyriotic* dimensions may likewise be primed or activated (cf. 1:1; 1:10). Similarly, since this testimony is uttered in the context of the Markan Jesus's therapeutic activity, the title Son of God may also further prime Davidic scripts, though, as we have seen, therapeutic activity has thus far more likely activated *kyriotic* scripts. Those in the audience strongly influenced by the notion of Solomon or David as an exorcist will have Davidic scripts activated here, as well, even if they do not ultimately settle on them for sense making. In Mark's Gospel, Jesus's healing powers may mimic Solomon's to a certain degree, but they derive instead from his assimilation to Yahweh, the ultimate healer of God's people (cf. 1:9–11; 2:1–12).<sup>120</sup>

The next episode continues, albeit more forcefully, the focus on the *kyriotic* dimension of the characterization of Mark's Jesus.

### Lord Over the Wind and Sea (Mark 4:35–41)

The story of the stilling of the storm in 4:35–41 uses allusive language for God to encourage continued assimilation of Mark's Jesus to Yahweh. The *synkris-tic* relationship, cued by language reminiscent of the God of Israel, forcefully confronts the audience through a well-placed question in 4:41 that encourages reflection on the characterization of Mark's Jesus in light of this dramatic scene at sea. This strongly evocative combination of allusive language and a rhetorical question recruits the earlier insinuations from the narrative—and listeners' hints based upon them—to further shape the characterization of Mark's Jesus vis-à-vis Yahweh. This episode will either inform later episodes or else be incorporated into *kyriotic* sonship upon subsequent reflection, especially in light of 12:35–37. In what follows, we explore this *kyriotic* portrait in the context

118 Καὶ πολλὰ ἐπετίμα αὐτοῖς ἵνα μὴ αὐτὸν φανερόν ποιήσωσιν.

119 Moloney, *Mark*, 76.

120 Something similar will be highlighted explicitly in 12:35–37 where the Markan Jesus will observe that David calls the Messiah, "Lord." The riddle is figuring out how this same Messiah can also be David's "son." See further below.

of the matrix of Jewish traditions likely activated by the episode, paying special attention to the perlocutionary effect of the question posed in 4:41.

As a great storm approaches and waves beat the boat nearly to submission, the disciples search frantically for their leader, whom they find asleep in the stern of the boat (4:37–38). The first question in the episode demonstrates their panic: διδάσκαλε, οὐ μέλει σοι ὅτι ἀπολλύμεθα; (4:38). Many in the audience will pass over the respectful epithet, “teacher,” but others may note that there is a hint of irony in addressing the Markan Jesus with such a mundane title. These audience members may recall that this Jesus seems to have been portrayed in ways that assimilate authority, behavior, and names previously reserved for God alone into the characterization of *kyriotic* sonship.<sup>121</sup> For these listeners, a tension may arise between the surface level presentation of the Markan Jesus and the latent one informed by both the preceding narrative and the host of schemas, themes, and scripts associated with Yahweh. From this perspective, the disciples have thus far failed to understand with whom they share the boat. Nevertheless, at this point in the episode, the unrelenting performance will prevent much reflection on the matter.

What may be said about the scripts evoked by this episode? It is widely acknowledged that our episode bears much resemblance to Jonah LXX.<sup>122</sup> Indeed, shared themes and common vocabulary unite the two scenes in their (1) departure by boat; (2) depiction of the violent storm at sea; (3) sleeping protagonist; (4) badly frightened sailors; (5) miraculous stilling related to the main character; and (6) marveling response by the sailors.<sup>123</sup> However, while Jesus is depicted as Jonah, he is likewise depicted as the god to whom the Markan sailors cry out in 4:38. As the sailors cry out to their own gods in Jonah 1:5 LXX and the sailors of Ps 107:4 LXX cry to Yahweh, so the disciples turn to the Markan Jesus (Mark 4:38).<sup>124</sup> Indeed, just as Israel’s God calmed the sea in Jonah 1:15 LXX, the Markan Jesus is the one who wields this power, commanding them effectively with the word of his mouth. Thus, while the Markan Jesus begins the scene as Jonah, the episode closes with him as Jonah’s God. Several other narrativel hints lead the audience along this path.

121 See above on Mark 1:3; 1:8; 1:24; 2:5, 7, 10.

122 E.g., Beavis, *Mark*, 91; Marcus, *Mark* 1–8, 337; O. Lamar Cope, *Matthew: A Scribe Trained for the Kingdom of Heaven*, CBQMS 5 (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1976), 96–97.

123 Beavis, *Mark*, 91; Marcus, *Mark* 1–8, 337; Cope, *Matthew*, 96–97.

124 Similarly, Daniel Johansson, “Jesus and God in the Gospel of Mark: Unity and Distinction” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 2011), 82.

First, the fact that the Markan Jesus is found asleep in the stern of the boat may activate a host of scripts associated with sleeping deities, who are awoken in order to respond to urgent pleas for help. These myths began in the broader ancient Near East and then were adapted in the Jewish scriptures.<sup>125</sup> For those in the audience familiar with Jewish scripts derived from the LXX, texts like the one below may have been activated or primed.

Wake up! Why do you sleep, O Lord? Arise, and do not finally reject us! Why do you turn away your face? Why do you forget our poverty and our affliction? Because our soul was humbled down to the dust, our stomach clung to the ground. Rise up, O Lord; help us, and redeem us for the sake of your name. (Ps 43:24–27 LXX)<sup>126</sup>

Seemingly in accordance with the pleas of the psalmist, the Markan Jesus wakes up and comes to the aid of his disciples, rebuking (ἐπετίμησεν) the wind and sea. Note that his treatment of these natural forces resembles his handling of demonic forces: σιώπα, πεφίμωσο.<sup>127</sup> Just as the unclean spirits and demons before, the wind and sea relent and submit before him (4:38–39).<sup>128</sup>

This picture of Jesus dwelling in the midst of his disciples and rising to their deliverance from the demonic sea may also activate scripts associated with Zech 2:10–3:2 LXX, in which God dwells in the midst of his people, rousing himself to action, and rebuking Satan.<sup>129</sup> At a broader, more foundational level, the Markan Jesus is portrayed in ways that hint at Jewish scripts in which God does battle with the sea and subdues it.<sup>130</sup> Whether Jonah (and the sleeping deity

125 For further discussion of the sleeping deity motif, see Bernard F. Batto, “The Sleeping God: An Ancient Near Eastern Motif of Divine Sovereignty,” *Bib* 68 (1987): 153–77.

126 ἐξεγέρθητι· ἵνα τί ὑπνοῖς, κύριε; ἀνάστηθι καὶ μὴ ἀπόσῃ εἰς τέλος. ἵνα τί τὸ πρόσωπόν σου ἀποστρέφεις, ἐπιλανθάνῃ τῆς πτωχείας ἡμῶν καὶ τῆς θλίψεως ἡμῶν; ὅτι ἐταπεινώθη εἰς χοῦν ἡ ψυχὴ ἡμῶν, ἐκολλήθη εἰς γῆν ἡ γαστήρ ἡμῶν. ἀνάστα, κύριε, βοήθησον ἡμῖν καὶ λύτρωσαι ἡμᾶς ἕνεκεν τοῦ ὀνόματός σου. See also Pss 7:7; 58:5b-6; 77:65–66; 107:25, 28–29 LXX.

127 Cf. Mark 1:25; 3:12.

128 For a discussion of the evidence from both Greek and Jewish literature for the demonization of the wind and the sea, see Wilhelm Fiedler, *Antiker Wetterzauber*, Würzburger Studien zur Altertumswissenschaft 1 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1931), 25–72. See also, Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 261–62.

129 Marcus, *Mark* 1–8, 338–39.

130 Cf. LXX Job 26:11–12; Ps 18:15; 104:7; 106:9; Isa 50:2. Further, there is evidence from an Aramaic exorcistic spell that links evil spirits to the primordial divine conquest of the sea. See Joseph Naveh and Shaked Shaul, eds., *Amulets and Magic Bowls: Aramaic Incantations of Late Antiquity* (Leiden: Brill, 1985), Amulet 2:7–10; Marcus, *Mark* 1–8, 338.

traditions), Zechariah, or simply the broadly founded notions that the God of Israel battled the sea and subdued it are activated, these scripts would prime or trigger the *synkristic* assimilation of Mark's Jesus to Yahweh.

If none of these scripts are cued—a distinct possibility, especially during the performance—Mark's Jesus will emerge as one who commands the forces of nature and thus as one who in some sense wields divine power. Such a portrait would match previous suggestions couched in *emphasis* (cf. 1:3; 1:7–8), along with the insinuation that the Markan Jesus has been a god-in-disguise from his baptism (cf. 1:10–11). Just as forgiving sins lies within his prerogative as the *kyrios*, so also does controlling nature at his will (cf. 2:1–12; 2:28). These nearer scripts are more likely to be activated during the performance itself; those from the LXX may also be activated. Whichever script is ultimately settled upon by the members of the audience, the result will be the same: further *kyriotic* assimilation.

The final question posed in the scene is critical for encouraging audience participation by prompting their reflection on the characterization of Mark's Jesus. The disciples exclaim, τίς ἄρα οὗτός ἐστιν ὅτι καὶ ὁ ἄνεμος καὶ ἡ θάλασσα ὑπακούει αὐτῷ; (4:41). While the narrative is not explicit, it nevertheless portrays Jesus “not so much as a human being who has trust in God's power to save, but as a divine being.”<sup>131</sup> Thus, Malbon does not go far enough when she writes, “[The question posed in 4:41] may also open to the implied audience the realization that Jesus's power over the sea can only be received from God, who has power of the sea in Scripture.”<sup>132</sup> This is not to suggest that there is no distinction between Mark's Jesus and Yahweh, as our protagonist emphasizes over the duration of the narrative.<sup>133</sup> Nevertheless, we have already seen in the preceding narrative that such a connection would not be foreign to many in the Markan audience, given the clues toward his assimilation to God up to this point.<sup>134</sup>

While those in the boat are slow to understand how this episode might affect their understanding of the Markan Jesus, the factors above strongly suggest that the *synkristic* relationship with Yahweh would be triggered for listeners, whether via scripts associated with the LXX or those arising from the preceding

131 Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 260. Similarly, Marcus, *Mark* 1–8, 339.

132 Malbon, *Mark's Jesus*, 140.

133 Cf. Mark 5:19–20; 10:17–22; 12:28–34; 15:34 (see further below).

134 In time, the narrative itself will corral a simplistic equation between Mark's Jesus and Yahweh, instead delimiting the lines of association through the Markan Jesus's own hesitancy regarding God-associations. See further in Chapter Five on 10:17–22 and in Chapter Seven below.

narrative.<sup>135</sup> To be sure, the unrelenting performance may delay much reflection, but the divine aspects of *kyriotic* sonship are beginning to pick up steam.

Beavis has recently argued that the deeds of the Markan Jesus in 4:35–41 are not substantially distinct enough from other, non-divine figures in the LXX to warrant the conclusion that the episode presents Jesus as a divine being. In support for this conclusion, Beavis cites the works of Elijah and Elisha, who perform impressive nature miracles (cf. 1 Kgs 18:41–46; 2 Kgs 2:8; 4:38–41; 6:5–7; 13:21 LXX).<sup>136</sup> However, at least three factors work against Beavis's conclusion. First, we have already seen that, from the prologue onward, *emphasis* and allusive language have been used for Mark's Jesus in a way that encourages taking him as a divine being in some way worthy of comparison with Yahweh.<sup>137</sup> The same cannot be said for Elijah and Elisha, either in 1–2 Kgs or in later Jewish traditions. Second, cognitive research has demonstrated that contextually relevant scripts (those already activate by the story) are more likely to be activated later on than new scripts, which have no prior introduction or foothold in the context.<sup>138</sup> Third, the nature miracles that Beavis draws our attention to (cited above), however powerful, are of a more mundane class than the Markan Jesus's command of the storm in Mark 4:35–41, in that the Markan scene points squarely to the issue of the characterization of Mark's Jesus, which more strongly cues Jewish scripts surrounding Yahweh than it does Elijah/Elisha. As we have seen above, the entire episode is replete with actions once associated with Yahweh. It is not a matter of merely pointing to the Markan Jesus's control of the wind and sea; it is in the very fabric of the scene as a whole.<sup>139</sup>

135 These suggestions would be all the more pronounced for those with prior exposure to the narrative (cf. 12:35–37).

136 Moses and Joshua, who both were given control over the sea and rivers (respectively), have also been named in similar arguments (cf. Exod 14:16, 27; Josh 3:7–4:19). See J. R. Daniel Kirk and Stephen L. Young, "I Will Set His Hand to the Sea": Psalm 88:26 LXX and Christology in Mark," *JBL* 133 (2014): 337.

137 In fairness, this is a conclusion that Beavis does not share.

138 Cf. Gernsbacher and Faust, "Skilled Suppression," 295–327; Gernsbacher and Kaschak, "Text Comprehension," 467–73. See further on "The Ancient Mind and Modern Cognitive Science" above in Chapter One.

139 Kirk and Young ("I Will Set His Hand to the Sea") have recently argued that Ps 88:26 LXX may undergird Mark 4:35–41 (and 6:45–52). Psalm 88:26 LXX depicts the bestowal of authority over the waters of the earth to Yahweh's ideal Davidic king: *καὶ θέσσομαι ἐν θαλάσῃ χεῖρα αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐν ποταμοῖς δεξιάν αὐτοῦ* ("I will set his hand upon the sea and in his right hand the rivers"). While it should be noted that Kirk and Young make clear that they are not trying to confirm Ps 88:26 LXX as an intentional intertext, so must it

We have seen that powerful instances of allusive language fill this scene and will ultimately lead careful and informed listeners to further compare Mark's Jesus to the God of Israel by activating scripts from earlier in the Markan narrative and/or those associated with Yahweh from Jewish cultural memory. For some, this will happen during the performance; for others, the dots will only be connected later. As we have already seen, such allusive language prompts the *synkristic* assimilation of Mark's Jesus to God.<sup>140</sup> The inclusion of the question in 4:41 further focuses the perlocutionary force of the allusive language on urging the inference that Mark's Jesus cannot be reckoned without drawing upon schemas and scripts for Yahweh.<sup>141</sup>

The question, τίς ἄρα οὗτός ἐστιν ὅτι καὶ ὁ ἄνεμος καὶ ἡ θάλασσα ὑπακούει αὐτῷ; is left unanswered in the immediate context, but is implicitly answered by the ensuing narrative,<sup>142</sup> namely the *testimonia* of the Legion at Gerasa (5:7), which hail Jesus as "Son of the Most High" (υἱὲ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου). Beyond this, the summation of the "miracles by the sea," in which the Markan Jesus demonstrates power also over demons (5:1–20),<sup>143</sup> disease (5:25–34), and even death itself (5:21–24, 35–43), pushes hesitant audience members ever closer toward assimilating him to God.

Thus, the whole block of the miracles by the sea narratively answers the question posed in 4:41: "Who then is this that even the wind and sea obey him?"<sup>144</sup> The portrait of Mark's Jesus is more complex than any one title or testimony, but the composite *kyriotic* portrait seems designed to remind the

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be pointed out that the evidence they amass in support for the conclusion that "early Judean readers" would detect a reference to Ps 88:26 is overly general (in the case of the purported points of contact with Mark more broadly) or overly sparse (in the case of the psalm's Davidic messianic reception). While the possibility is tempting, and cannot be ruled out entirely, given the stronger narratival connections to scripts associated with Yahweh's mastery over the sea and the continuous pace of performance, audience members familiar with the Jewish scriptures (and related traditions) will have the divine scripts activated more readily, since they are ubiquitous in this episode (and preceding ones). See Gernsbacher and Faust, "Skilled Suppression," 295–327; Gernsbacher and Kaschak, "Text Comprehension," 467–73.

140 See further on "Inference Generation and Ancient Rhetorical Theory," in Chapter Two above.

141 Treatment of all three of the questions lies unfortunately beyond the scope of this project. For a thorough discussion of the rhetorical effect the questions in 4:38 and 4:40 might have had on audience members, see Bolt, *Jesus' Defeat of Death*, 135–36.

142 Or the preceding narrative, which is likewise more than sufficient to lead the audience to the conclusion that the Markan Jesus should be assimilated to God in 4:35–41.

143 On which, see below.

144 Cf. Mark 8:29b; 9:7; 14:61–62; 15:39 (see further *ad loc* below).



audience that they are on the right track as they experience the narrative. Indeed, the question would likely go a long way toward helping careful listeners fill out the narrative portrait of *kyriot*ic sonship thus far—a portrait built primarily upon the words and deeds of the Markan Jesus, along with the *testimonia* that have cast him as “the Christ” and “the Son of God” (1:1, 10; 3:11), the “Lord” (1:3, 2:28), the “Mightier One (1:7); and the “Holy One of God” (1:24).<sup>145</sup> Viewed in the context of these affirmations, we have not to this point encountered a more forceful depiction of the divine status of Mark’s Jesus.

Yet one of the complications posed by this performance-oriented study is the ever-present temptation to think elements of the rhetoric of inference would have been clearer than they really were during their actual performance. On written pages, we are able to slow down the performance, limit the onslaught of retrospective interference, and carefully consider allusive language and *emphasis* in a controlled environment. However, as we saw in Chapter Two, hearing a text in performance affords no such privileges. This is all the more the case when considering the rhetoric of inference. The portrait of *kyriot*ic sonship is constructed across the entire narrative, with some elements receiving greater attention than others in particular episodes. Moreover, these elements are embedded such that many will require further reflection to understand the gravity of each scene, including this one, which is strongly evocative of scripts associated with Yahweh’s behavior. This is no flaw in the rhetorical program of the Gospel—far from it. Patient subtlety lies at the very heart of effective use of figural speech, which thrives on allowing audience members to come to the narrative’s conclusions in their own time.

### The Merciful Davidic Lord (Mark 5:1–20)

The question, “Who then is this?!” (4:41), finds its initial reply in 5:1–20 where the audience encounters a demon-possessed man who comes face-to-face with the Markan Jesus on a beach at Gerasa.<sup>146</sup> The scene is reminiscent of the

<sup>145</sup> Similarly, Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 263.

<sup>146</sup> The Nestle-Aland 28th edition—followed for this study—has Γερασηνῶν at 5:2, which is supported by a number of manuscripts, including  $\aleph^*$  B D 2427<sup>vid</sup> latt sa. Alternatively, Γεργεσηνων is found in  $\aleph^2$  L  $\Delta$   $\Theta$   $f^1$  28. 33. 565. 579. 700. 892. 1241. 1424. 2542. sy<sup>s.hmg</sup> bo. While some manuscripts support the reading Γαδαρηνων (A C et al.), it is likely that Γαδαρηνων entered the Markan manuscript tradition in an effort to get the narrative to conform with Matt 8:28, which reads Γαδαρηνων, rather than Γερασηνων. While the reading, Γερασηνων, is the most difficult and thus to be preferred, the specific geographical parameters of the

exorcism in 1:23–27, though much more detail is offered here. Once again, a possessed man tries to control the Markan Jesus through supernatural knowledge of his identity (cf. 1:24): Ἰησοῦ υἱὲ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου. However, there are hints that the Legion does more than simply acknowledge something hidden from other characters about the Markan Jesus.

When the demon sees Jesus from far off, the possessed man runs up and bows before him (προσεκύνησεν αὐτῷ), shouting in a very loud voice: τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί, Ἰησοῦ υἱὲ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου; ὀρκίζω σε τὸν θεόν, μὴ με βασιανίσῃς (5:7). On the story level, the Legion is merely trying to control Jesus. However, the fact that the demon lies prostrate (προσεκύνησεν) before him and acknowledge his (*kyriotic*) sonship (“Son of the Most High”), leaves open the possibility of an ironic insinuation that, for some audience members, the demon is paying homage to Jesus. To be sure, Focant has (quite rightly) criticized Joseph Torchia’s understanding that “the possessed man” makes “a messianic profession of faith in the divine origin of Jesus.”<sup>147</sup> However, in so doing Focant neglects the illocutionary force of the words in the performance, which in turn leads to an overly rigid reading of the narrative itself. Rather, as in 1:24, the demons’ attempt to control the Markan Jesus is co-opted as another *testimonium* in support of the narrative’s portrait of Jesus.

The title “Son of the Most High” in the demonic “testimony” is particularly fitting in this context since it calls to mind the name that Gentiles often used for the God of Israel in the LXX—though whether or not the specificity of this title would be picked up during a performance is certainly debatable.<sup>148</sup> Nevertheless, the narrative uses speech-in-character (*prosopopoeia*) to cast the Gentile man possessed by the Legion as speaking in a manner fitting for the occasion.<sup>149</sup> Therefore, the title “Son of the Most High,” like “Son of the Blessed” in 14:61 (see below), should not be viewed as distinct from “God’s Son,” but rather a culturally nuanced expression of the core testimony of Mark’s Gospel concerning Jesus.<sup>150</sup>

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location are still a matter of debate. See Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2d ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2005), 18–19; Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 263–264.

147 Focant, *Mark*, 203, commenting on N. Joseph Torchia, “Eschatological Elements in Jesus’ Healing of the Gerasene Demoniac: An Exegesis of 5:1–20,” *IBS* 23 (2001): 14.

148 Cf. e.g., Gen 14:18; Num 24:16; Dan 3:26; 4:2; 2 Macc 3:31; 3 Macc 7:9; 1 Esd 2:3.

149 On *prosopopoeia*, see, e.g., Theon, *Prog.* 115–118. Cf. Ps-Hermogenes, *Prog.* 20–21.

150 Indeed, the entire matrix of “Son” titles in Mark’s narrative would be primed, perhaps even activated, by any one of the individual titles, in this case, “Son of the Most High” (υἱὲ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου). See further Chapter Two above. Cf. Hogan, *Cognitive Science*, 42–58.

Similar expressions are found in Luke 1:32 and 4Q246, where both represent a Davidic messiah figure.<sup>151</sup> Regardless of its use outside of Mark's Gospel, the title carries strong Davidic connotations in the Markan narrative itself, as we have already seen above (esp. 1:10). We have also seen that the title "son of God," which is content addressable with "Son of the Most High God," connotes divinity in the broader Greco-Roman world.<sup>152</sup> In other words, the title itself may activate either divine or Davidic scripts for audience members, based on how they hear Legion's cries (5:7), as well as how they have heard previous episodes. Yet even audience members who hear "Son of the Most High God" in initially Davidic terms will be encouraged to infer that someone greater than David is here (cf. 4:35–41; 5:19–20).<sup>153</sup> This is particularly the case considering how the episode concludes.

Once freed from the Legion, the man begs the Markan Jesus to allow him to "be with him" (μετ' αὐτοῦ ᾗ) (5:18). His requests are refused, however, and

151 Both Luke 1:32 and 4Q246 connect the title to Davidic hope. See further Marcus, *Mark* 1–8, 343; Michael F. Bird, *Are You the One Who Is to Come?: The Historical Jesus and the Messianic Question* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009), 87–91. On the fragmentary Qumran 4Q246, see John J. Collins, "Messiahs in Context: Method in the Study of Messianism in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Methods of Investigation on the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Khirbet Qumran Site: Present Realities and Future Prospects*, ed. Michael O. Wise et al., *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 722 (New York: The New York Academy of Sciences, 1994), 293–95; Johannes Zimmerman, "Observations on 4Q246—The 'Son of God,'" in *Qumran-Messianism: Studies on the Messianic Expectations in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. James H. Charlesworth, Hermann Lichtenberger, and Gerbern S. Oegema (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 175–90; Collins and Collins, *King and Messiah as Son*, 165–73. For an alternative reading, which acknowledges Davidic descent for the "Son of God" figure in 4Q246, while simultaneously rejecting his messianic status, owing to the absence of the title, "messiah," see Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "The Aramaic 'Son of God' Text from Qumran Cave 4 (4Q246)," in *The Dead Sea Scrolls and Christian Origins* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 60; idem, *The One Who Is to Come* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 104–07. For the view that the "Son of God" is actually a negative figure (e.g., Antiochus Epiphanes), see James D. G. Dunn, "'Son of God' as 'Son of Man' in the Dead Sea Scrolls? A Response to John Collins on 4Q246," in *The Scrolls and the Scriptures: Qumran Fifty Years after*, ed. Stanley E. Porter and Craig A. Evans, *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha: Supplement Series* 26 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 198–210. I do not find either Fitzmyer's or Dunn's reasoning compelling since they are overly dependent on titles for characterization.

152 See above on Mark 1:1 and 1:10 in Chapter Three.

153 In the parlance of cognitive science, the Davidic scripts will be reliably suppressed since they are foreign to the immediate context, which assigns the therapeutic activity to the κύριος, rather than to a Davidic figure (cf. 5:19–20). Cf. Gernsbacher and Faust, "Skilled Suppression," 295–327; Gernsbacher and Kaschak, "Text Comprehension," 467–73.

he is instructed to go back home and report, “how much the Lord has done for you, and what mercy he has shown you” (ἀπάγγελον αὐτοῖς ὅσα ὁ κύριός σοι πεποίηκεν καὶ ἡλέησέν σε) (5:19). At issue here is the referent of κύριος in 5:19. The strong parallelism between 5:19 and 5:20 has led to two primary options for understanding the referent of ὁ κύριος:

5:19 ἀπάγγελον αὐτοῖς ὅσα ὁ κύριός σοι πεποίηκεν  
Tell them how much the Lord has done for you.

5:20 ἤρξατο κηρύσσειν [ . . . ] ὅσα ἐποίησεν αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς  
He began to proclaim how much Jesus did for him.

Some audience members may, as Alan Culpepper has argued, infer that Jesus is the intended referent.<sup>154</sup> While it may seem a bit strange for the Markan Jesus to refer to himself in such a way, it is not as though he never refers to himself with a third person circumlocution.<sup>155</sup> For audience members following this line of thinking, the Markan Jesus has just identified himself as the κύριος, who has exorcised the Legion from the man and restored him to health. In this case, the *kyriotic* dimensions of Jesus’s sonship are explicitly activated; this is particularly important since it is in an exorcistic context. The Markan Jesus’s exorcistic activity must then be understood in terms of his status as “Lord.”<sup>156</sup>

On the other hand, since Jesus is the speaker here, other audience members may infer that he is talking about the God of Israel, who is called ὁ κύριος in the LXX. Audience members who understand the Markan Jesus thusly may note that, regardless of the accumulating *kyriotic* characterization, Jesus deflects all honor toward God. Yet the narrator informs hearers that the man did not follow the commands of the Markan Jesus precisely; instructed to proclaim *God’s* mercy, the man instead announces *Jesus’s* mercy.<sup>157</sup> Just as if Jesus were the initial referent, the interplay between the command of the Markan Jesus

154 R. Alan Culpepper, *Mark*, Smyth & Helwys Biblical Commentary (Macon, Ga.: Smyth & Helwys, 2007), 170. See similarly, Decker, *Mark* 1–8, 127.

155 Cf. Mark 2:10, 28; 8:31, 38; 9:9, 12, 31; 10:33, 45; 13:26; 14:14, 21, 41, 62.

156 A similar conclusion was shrouded in the rhetoric of inference in 1:23–28 and 2:1–12. See further above.

157 On this understanding, there would be no incongruity between the prior commands to secrecy from the Markan Jesus. On the contrary, 5:19 is completely consistent with them since the Markan Jesus has spun the story such that God, not himself, has had mercy on the man (regardless of the point of view of the narrator and the former *demoniac*). *Contra* C. Clifton Black, *Mark*, Abingdon New Testament Commentary (Nashville: Abingdon, 2011), 138; Culpepper, *Mark*, 170.

and the man's proclamation of what Jesus did for him lead to further *synkristic* assimilation of Mark's Jesus to God.

Here we might recall the words of Demetrius that "we are left to infer a great deal from a short statement" (*Eloc.* 243).<sup>158</sup> By setting the words of the Markan Jesus next to the report of the narrator, the audience initially encounters ambiguity in the narrative. However, that same parallelism provides the material needed to see through the opacity by inferring that the actions of the Markan Jesus are evidently being assimilated into the actions of God.<sup>159</sup> The rhetorical effect of the subtle *emphasis* in 5:19–20 is much more forceful than if the same idea had been laid bare before listeners in a more direct manner. While this episode does not go so far as to present Jesus literally as the God of Israel,<sup>160</sup> neither does it allow the two figures to be absolutely separated.<sup>161</sup>

On either construal of the referent of κύριος in 5:19, Mark's Jesus is implicitly joined with Yahweh. As we saw above, this portrayal would likely activate Jewish scripts associated with Yahweh as healer,<sup>162</sup> as well as earlier *kyriotic* healing stories (e.g., 2:1–12). While it should not be ruled out that the depiction of Jesus as an exorcist, even a *kyriotic* one, may initially prime or activate the Davidic scripts associated with exorcism for those in the audience predisposed to such a portrait,<sup>163</sup> the *synkristic* relationship with Yahweh is nearer in the context and explicitly activated by 5:19–20. These Yahweh-as-healer scripts will thus probably suppress any activated Davidic scripts, which may have been triggered earlier in the episode.<sup>164</sup>

As in 4:35–41, this episode leaves much to be unpacked during subsequent reflection. However, this is not to say that no one from the audience will experience this episode as assimilating Mark's Jesus to God during the performance, especially given the structural similarity between 5:19 and 5:20 on the heels of the bold depiction of his authority over nature (cf. 4:35–41). Nevertheless,

158 Καὶ γὰρ ἐκ τοῦ βραχέως ῥηθέντος ὑπονοῆσαι τὰ πλείστα δεῖ.

159 See esp. Mark 2:1–12 and 4:35–41 above.

160 Cf. Mark 10:18, 12:28–34; 12:35–37; 13:32.

161 Marcus, *Mark* 1–8, 354. See also, Dieter Lührmann, *Das Markusevangelium*, HNT 3 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1987), 101; Hooker, *Mark*, 145–46; John Paul Heil, *The Gospel of Mark as Model for Action: A Reader-Response Commentary* (New York: Paulist, 1992), 121–22; van Iersel, *Mark*, 201–02; Naluparayil, *Identity of Jesus in Mark*, 334; Pilgaard, *Markusevangeliet*, 166; Hartvigsen, *Prepare*, 235–36.

162 See, e.g., Zech 13:2 LXX; 1Q20 XX, 28; 4Q560 I, 4.

163 Cf. LAB 60:3; Josephus, *Ant.* 8.2.5 §§45–49, along with the entirety of T. Sol. See further above on 1:21–28; 2:1–12; 2:23–28; 3:7–12.

164 Cf. Gernsbacher and Faust, "Skilled Suppression," 295–327; Gernsbacher and Kaschak, "Text Comprehension," 467–73.

the hints continue to mount and will have a cumulative effect as the narrative continues. The subtlety gains momentum as the story progresses, with the goal of taking more and more audience members with it.<sup>165</sup> In this way, rather than convincing the audience boldly and swiftly of *kyriotic* sonship, the evangelist seems to have envisioned the slow and steady winning over of his or her listeners. In light of ancient rhetorical theory, both the divine and Davidic elements of the characterization have a better chance of taking hold if hearers believe they have discovered it on their own.<sup>166</sup>

### The One Who Feeds God's People and Strides on the Sea (Mark 6:30–52)

While Mark 6:30–44 and 6:45–52 are often treated separately, the lack of a traditional statement of amazement in 6:44, together with the καὶ εὐθὺς in 6:45 and the analeptic reference to 6:30–44 in 6:52, suggest that the episodes are best understood together, especially as they relate to the *kyriotic* dimension of the characterization of Mark's Jesus.

On the surface, the first feeding episode (6:30–44) simply portrays the Markan Jesus providing sustenance for an extraordinarily large group of people with an extraordinarily small amount of food. For some in the audience, the scene may never move beyond this surface level (cf. 6:51–52). However, informed audience members may have a number of schemas and scripts associated with David, Moses, and/or Yahweh initially activated by different aspects of this episode. Yet, when heard in the context of 6:45–52, a connection encouraged by the narrative itself (cf. 6:51–52), audience members are encouraged to make sense of the episode in light of scripts associated with Yahweh's great acts of deliverance in Jewish cultural memory. As we begin, we must remember that things will seem clearer below than they would initially have appeared during a performance. Many hearers will probably need more time to reflect on the scene before fully appreciating the import of this episode for the characterization of Jesus.

<sup>165</sup> This is particularly the case given the corporate nature of performance and its influence on the audience experience. Recall from Chapter Two that Quintilian drew attention to the influential effect that audience members could exert upon each other (cf. *Inst.* 10.1.16–19).

<sup>166</sup> Cf. Demetrius, *Eloc.* 222. See further “Inference Generation in Ancient Rhetorical Theory” in Chapter Two above and “To What Ends the Rhetoric of Inference?” in Chapter Seven below.

*The One Who Feeds God's People (Mark 6:30–44)*

We pick up the narrative as the Markan Jesus beckons those he has been teaching to come away to a deserted place (εἰς ἔρημον τόπον) and rest a while (6:31). The scene may activate the story of the exodus for those familiar with associated Jewish schemas and scripts. Not only do both scenes take place in the ἔρημος, where the people grumble before Moses/Jesus, but they also both involve two types of food. In the exodus (Exod 16:18), manna and quail are provided, whereas in this scene bread and fish are made available (Mark 6:38). In both the people's hunger is satiated, with a lot of food leftover.<sup>167</sup> However, the scenes differ in what should be done with the leftover provision. In the exodus, the food is to be discarded (cf. Exod 16:16–19), whereas in the Markan account the leftover food is to be gathered up, presumably for sharing with those who were not with Jesus in the wilderness (cf. Mark 6:42–43).<sup>168</sup> In this way, the Markan setting not only mirrors the exodus and Jesus's links to Moses, but it does so in a way that transcends them.<sup>169</sup>

The narrator informs audience members that the Markan Jesus has compassion on the crowds, whom he views as sheep without a shepherd (Mark 6:34).<sup>170</sup> A number of scripts may be activated at this point. God is frequently depicted as a “shepherd” (ποιμήν) over his people in the LXX.<sup>171</sup> As we shall see, the *synkristic* relationship with Yahweh will be activated by later elements in this episode. Might the same be the case here?

Alternatively, the title “shepherd” was also used of human leaders over both Israel and foreign nations.<sup>172</sup> For our purposes, it is relevant that David was cast as the shepherd over Israel,<sup>173</sup> and this expectation was carried over to an ideal and future Davidic figure.<sup>174</sup> Audience members, who have appreciated the Davidic contours of the characterization of the Markan Jesus thus far, may have these and related schemas and scripts primed or activated by the notion that Jesus took compassion on these “sheep without a shepherd.” The logical inference would be that the Markan Jesus is “the messiah of Israel, the king whom they need.”<sup>175</sup>

167 Beavis, *Mark*, 106.

168 Marcus, *Mark* 1–8, 421.

169 Similarly, Marcus, *Mark* 1–8, 421.

170 Καὶ ἐσπλαγγίσθη ἐπ' αὐτούς, ὅτι ᾔσαν ὡς πρόβατα μὴ ἔχοντα ποιμένα.

171 See, e.g., LXX Isa 40:11; Jer 38:10; Ezek 34:11–16; Ps 22:1; 27:9; 79:1.

172 Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 319.

173 Cf. LXX 2 Sam 5:1–2; 1 Chron 11:1–2; Ps 2:9; Tg. Ps. 2:9; Ps 78:70:71; 4Q504 1–2 IV, 6–8.

174 Cf. LXX Mic 5:4; Ezek 34:23–24; 37:24; Ps. Sol. 17:40–41. See further Talbert, *Matthew*, 31.

175 Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 319.



Finally, Moses also uses shepherd terminology in his request for a successor, so that God's people will not be like sheep without a shepherd (cf. Num 27:17 LXX). While Joshua is appointed in the context, the request itself tracks back to Deut 18:15–18 LXX. Audience members for whom this matrix of traditions is activated may view the Markan Jesus as an eschatological Moses figure in this scene (on which, see further below).<sup>176</sup>

While any of these scripts may be activated for individual audience members, an amalgamation of them—both divine and royal—will likely be called to mind across the entire group. As Talbert has pointed out in a different context, Mosaic tradition in no way detracts from the notion of Davidic royalty,<sup>177</sup> since Moses was held to be a king in some sectors of Jewish thought.<sup>178</sup> Indeed, Philo portrays Moses as the pinnacle of kingly character.<sup>179</sup> Upon further reflection, the relevant Mosaic and Davidic schemas and scripts would aid in constructing a more robust characterization of Mark's Jesus in this episode. However, the narrative focus to this point upon the *synkristic* assimilation of Jesus to God, along with the lack of *explicitly* Mosaic or Davidic cues, makes it likely that audience members will (even unconsciously) select the God-scripts for sense making and suppress those associated with David and Moses.<sup>180</sup>

Other clues may lead perceptive members of the audience to select God-scripts for sense making in this episode. First, the mention of “green grass” (ἐπὶ τῷ ἁλῶνι ἁλῶνι), upon which the Markan Jesus orders the people to sit, provides a fertile symbol that primes scripts associated with the eschatological exodus<sup>181</sup> and perhaps even Psalm 22 LXX.<sup>182</sup> Given the paucity of references to color elsewhere in Mark's Gospel,<sup>183</sup> it is highly likely that this symbol moves beyond simple *ekphrastic* speech to contributing to the meaning of episode via *emphasis*.<sup>184</sup> For those in the audience for whom Psalm 22 LXX is activated, the

176 Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 319.

177 Talbert, *Matthew*, 38.

178 See, e.g., Philo, *Mos.* 1.334; *Mek.* on Exodus 18:14.

179 See further Talbert, *Matthew*, 38. Cf. Louis H. Feldman, “Philo's View of Moses' Birth and Upbringing,” *CBQ* 64 (2002): 258.

180 On suppression and enhancement (selection) of scripts, see Gernsbacher and Faust, “Skilled Suppression,” 295–327; Gernsbacher and Kaschak, “Text Comprehension,” 467–73.

181 Gnilya, *Markus*, 1:260, who cites Isa 35:1 and 2 Bar. 29:5–8.

182 Marcus, *Mark* 1–8, 408; Dale C. Allison Jr., “Psalm 23(22) in Early Christianity: A Suggestion,” *IBS* 5 (1983): 132–37.

183 The only other references to color in Mark's Gospel are to white garments (9:3; 16:5) and a purple cloak (15:17; 15:20).

184 Again, we recall the words of Demetrius that symbols are particularly pregnant for *emphasis* (*Eloc.* 243). In favor of this understanding, both the purple robe (royalty) and

Markan Jesus fills in for the Lord (κύριος), who shepherds (ποιμαίνει) his people and makes them rest in a verdant/green place (εἰς τόπον χλόης) (Ps 22.1–2).<sup>185</sup> Likewise, the Markan Jesus “prepares a table” (Ps 22:5 LXX) for the people of God when he blesses and breaks the loaves and divides the fish (Mark 6:41).

Scholars sometimes point out the ambiguity in the clause, εὐλόγησεν καὶ κατέκλασεν τοὺς ἄρτους (Mark 6:41c). For Marcus, at stake is whether the Markan Jesus blessed *God* or the *loaves* themselves (perhaps even causing their multiplication<sup>186</sup>)—the referent is unclear.<sup>187</sup> The fact that the Markan Jesus first lifts his eyes to heaven (6:41b) after picking up the loaves and fish (6:41a), but before blessing (6:42c), suggests that God is blessed. But the verb-καί-verb-object construction suggests that the verbs share their object: the Markan Jesus multiplies the loaves himself through his own power, blessing them and then breaking them. Indeed, the fact that both referents are grammatically possible and contextually available suggests that we have another case of *emphasis* through ambiguity, insinuating that the Markan Jesus miraculously provided food for his people. If Psalm 22 LXX were not activated in the minds of those in the audience, the exodus would likely stand in its place. In this case, the Markan Jesus would bear resemblance to the “Lord” (κύριος) of the exodus, who provided manna as bread (μαν, ἄρτος) for his people in the wilderness (ἐρημος) (Exod 16:29–33 LXX). Alternatively, the more fundamental script of Yahweh’s provision of food for his people may be selected.

Both Hartvigsen and Beavis have recently suggested that this episode draws on, or activates, the narrative in 2 Kgs 4:42–44 LXX where Elisha instructs the feeding of a hundred men from twenty barley loaves and fruitcakes based on a divine directive.<sup>188</sup> The similarities are obviously striking, especially the excess

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the white garment (purity) function similarly later in the Gospel (9:3; 15:17; 15:20; 16:5). In *ekphrasis* or *demonstratio*, an event is described with such vivid detail that the scene seems to be enacted before the eyes of those in the audience. See, e.g., Theon, *Prog.* 118–120; Ps-Hermogenes, *Prog.* 22–23; Rhet. Her. 2.30.49; 4.39.51; 4.54.68; Quintilian, *Inst.* 4.2.63–64; 6.2.32; 8.3.61; 9.2.40. Cf. Ruth Webb, *Ekphrasis, Imagination and Persuasion in Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Practice* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009), esp. 131–66.

185 Allison points to the fact that Ps 22 LXX has also been interpreted eschatologically by other early Christian texts, as well, noting particularly Rev 7:17 and 1 Clem. 26. An eschatological interpretation of Ps 23 is likewise found in some rabbinic texts (Gen. Rab. 88.5; Exod. Rab. 25.7; 50.5; Num. Rab. 21.21). Allison, “Psalm 23(22),” 132–37. Cf. Marcus, *Mark* 1–8, 408.

186 Martin Dibelius, *From Tradition to Gospel*, trans. Bertram Lee Woolf (London: Ivor Nicholson and Watson, 1935), 90, cited in Marcus, *Mark* 1–8, 409.

187 E.g., Marcus, *Mark* 1–8, 409.

188 Hartvigsen, *Prepare*, 267; Beavis, *Mark*, 106–07. Cf. Lars Hartman, *Mark for the Nations: A Text- and Reader-Oriented Commentary* (Eugene, Ore.: Pickwick, 2010), 263; Yarbrow

of food at the end of the feeding. However, the differences—most notably the greater paucity of food and greater number of people, along with the shepherd/exodus imagery in the Markan narrative—indicate that, for those in the audience to whom this prophetic script was available, and even primed or initially activated, the overall portrait of the Markan scene would probably push them toward a characterization of Mark's Jesus that far surpasses anything associated with Elisha and closer toward assimilation with Yahweh.

Since the second feeding scene (8:1–9) is similar to the one in 6:30–44, this study does not provide a detailed discussion below. It must suffice to say that the scene in 8:1–9 reinforces the prophetic, exodus, and eschatological themes from the first account.<sup>189</sup> Most significant for our purposes is the inclusion of the question, πόθεν τούτους δυνήσεται τις ὧδε χορτάσαι ἄρτων ἐπ' ἑρημίας; (8:4). Considering their presence at the feeding of the five thousand, the disciples “display truly monumental stupidity” in this exchange.<sup>190</sup> However, by this point there will be a growing suspicion among those in the audience as to how the hungry will be fed in a wilderness so reminiscent of the exodus: the Markan Jesus, whose compassion moves him to the miraculous provision of food, will ensure that it is so. While not all will make this deduction during the performance, many will, and still more will join these perceptive listeners as the performance barrels toward the passion.

In sum, a variety of scripts may be activated which could indicate for careful listeners that Mark's Jesus bears resemblance to a Davidic messianic figure, a Moses figure,<sup>191</sup> or even the One who called Moses to lead his people out of Egypt. While some may (even unconsciously) select the Davidic or Mosaic scripts for sense making, the focus the narrative has placed on Jesus's assimilation to Yahweh to this point makes God-scripts more likely to be selected at this point, as well.<sup>192</sup> The primary evidence for this characterization comes in the potential for symbolism and *emphasis* (6:39, 41),<sup>193</sup> along with the activation

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Collins, *Mark*, 320; Hooker, *Mark*, 164; Donahue and Harrington, *Mark*, 208; Marcus, *Mark* 1–8, 407, 415–16.

189 Marcus, *Mark* 1–8, 497.

190 Marcus, *Mark* 1–8, 497.

191 Note that even Moses was considered a deified figure in some Jewish thinking (e.g., Philo, *Moses* 2.288; 4Q374 2 II; 1Q377 2 II). See further M. David Litwa, *Jesus Deus: The Early Christian Depiction of Jesus As a Mediterranean God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014), 111–40.

192 Cf. Gernsbacher and Faust, “Skilled Suppression,” 295–327; Gernsbacher and Kaschak, “Text Comprehension,” 467–73.

193 Symbolism is arguably a subset of *emphasis*, on which see Chapter Two above. That such a subtle, often overlooked detail can be expected to carry such christological weight is

of a combination of shepherd scripts, the exodus, and/or Psalm 22 LXX over the course of the scene. A *kyriotic* rendering of this scene is likewise confirmed both by the preceding narrative and the episode that immediately follows. As we shall see below, 6:45–52 strongly assimilates Mark's Jesus to Yahweh. When the disciples fail to understand, the narrator blames it on the fact that they first failed to understand about the loaves (6:51–52; cf. 6:30–44). The implication is that they should have expected Jesus to act as a god (even as Israel's deity), based on his behavior with the loaves.

*The One who Strides Upon the Sea (Mark 6:45–52)*

Leaving the first feeding scene, those in the audience watch as the Markan Jesus immediately (καὶ εὐθὺς) makes his disciples cross over to Bethsaida by boat while he sends the crowd on its way (6:45). What happens next triggers the previous storm episode (4:35–41) where we found reason to conclude that the audience was supposed to infer that the Markan Jesus was depicted as though he were Yahweh, sleeping in the stern of the boat, awakened by his disciples' "prayers" for help, and responding to their cries by exorcising the demonic powers present in the wind and the waves. Like the unclean spirits exorcised earlier in the narrative, the wind and sea were subjugated before the Lord over nature. In the present episode, the Markan Jesus is depicted in similar, if stronger, terms. While nothing is made explicit, the narrative continues to make ample use of allusive language to exploit more profound, latent meanings. The result for some will be a portrait that insinuates assimilation to Yahweh, in keeping with the preceding episode (6:30–44; cf. 6:52).<sup>194</sup> As these latent insinuations continue to mount, we ought to imagine more and more listeners inferring these hidden elements on their own.

That the scene begins with the Markan Jesus praying upon a mountain should not be overlooked since mountains hold symbolic importance in Jewish tradition and are often associated with revelation from God (cf. 6:46).<sup>195</sup> If the exodus imagery here and in the preceding episode (6:30–44) is activated, then audience members may infer that the Markan Jesus was communing with God

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supported both by Demetrius's comments on the efficacy narrative ambiguity when brevity is combined with symbols (*Eloc.* 243) and the narrator's comments in the next episode, where the disciples are said to have missed the significance of the Markan Jesus's striding upon the waves "because they did not understand about the loaves" (6:52).

194 Cf. Mark 2:1–12; 4:35–41; 5:1–20.

195 Exod 24:15–16; 25:8–9 LXX.

on the mountain, just as Moses had met with Yahweh in Exod 24:15–18 LXX.<sup>196</sup> As Joel Marcus has pointed out, some Jewish traditions held that Moses was deified by his experience on the mountain with God on Sinai.<sup>197</sup> Those audience members who had these and other scripts associated with Moses activated in the previous scene may have them triggered here, as well. However, for those in the audience who unconsciously select scripts associated with Moses to make sense of Jesus initially in this scene, what follows will urge them to recalibrate their characterization based on scripts associated with Yahweh.<sup>198</sup>

No less than four seemingly innocuous elements of the story connote the assimilation of Mark's Jesus to the God of the LXX. First, the Markan Jesus walks upon the sea. Walking on the sea would not in and of itself *necessarily* suggest assimilation to Yahweh in particular. Greek, Roman, and Jewish traditions all depict deities controlling wind and sea and making a path through the sea.<sup>199</sup> Moreover, both Jewish and Greek traditions allow for a deity giving power over the sea or rivers to specific human beings.<sup>200</sup> This power over the sea also began to be associated with rulers and kings, like Xerxes, by the fifth century BCE.<sup>201</sup> Even some rulers like Antiochus IV Epiphanes claimed the ability to pass over the sea, as if it were land.<sup>202</sup> Audience members

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- 196 Indeed, it is interesting that Exod 24:15 LXX has added to the MT a reference to Joshua (Ἰησοῦς), joining Moses on the mountain. Is this text specifically being dramatically enacted in the Markan narrative? It matters not for our purposes, since the tradition of Moses on the mountain with God is activated in any case.
- 197 Marcus (*Mark* 1–8, 423) notes Ezekiel the Tragedian, *Exagoge* 68–81 and Philo, *Life of Moses* 1.155–158; cf. Wayne A. Meeks, “Moses as God and King,” in *Religions in Antiquity: Essays in Memory of Erwin Ramsdell Goodenough*, ed. Jacob Neusner, SHR 14 (Leiden: Brill, 1968), 354–71.
- 198 Similarly, Marcus (*Mark* 1–8, 423) flirts with this idea, asking, “Is it just a coincidence that in the remainder of our narrative Jesus shows himself to be godlike?”
- 199 Yarbrow Collins (*Mark*, 328–29) cites Homer, *Il.* 13.23–31; Virgil, *Aen.* 5:799–802, 815–821; see also LXX Job 9:8; Hab 3:15; Ps 76:20; Isa 43:16; 51:9–10; Sir 24:5–6; for further discussion of Greco-Roman sources, see Dennis R. MacDonald, *The Homeric Epics and the Gospel of Mark* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2000), 148–53; Adela Yarbrow Collins, “Rulers, Divine Men, and Walking on the Water,” in *Religious Propaganda and Missionary Competition in the New Testament World*, ed. Lukas Bormann, Kelly del Del Tredici, and Angela Standhartinger (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 207–27.
- 200 Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 329. Cf. Exod 14:21–29; Josh 3:7–4:18; 2 Kgs 2:8, 14; Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica* 1.182–184; Apollodorus, *Library* 1.4.3; Seneca, *Hercules furens* 319–324.
- 201 Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 330–31. Cf. Herodotus, *Hist.* 7.56; Dio Chrysostom, *Rhod.* 3.30–31; Menander frg. 924K.
- 202 2 Macc 5:21 LXX. For further discussion of the Greek, Roman, and Jewish contexts surrounding the Markan Jesus's walking on the sea, see Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 328–32.

saturated in these scripts and themes prevalent in common Roman life would probably understand the twice-repeated line that Jesus walked on the sea (6:48–49) as implying the divine status of the Markan Jesus. Concerning divine hydropatetic beings, the fact that Yahweh alone walks on water in Jewish tradition would only support this inference.<sup>203</sup> So strong are the ties to Exodus LXX later in the story that the Jewish script would be activated even for those with only a cursory exposure to the traditions from outside the story (see below). However, for audience members living in a world where the “Jewish,” “Greek,” and Roman traditions informed one’s experiences synergistically, the picture of the Markan Jesus striding on the sea may fuse images of Yahweh walking on the sea from the LXX with images of rulers and kings who were believed to (or claimed to) walk on water.<sup>204</sup>

Second, in Mark 6:48b the audience hears that the Markan Jesus “intended to pass them by” (ἤθελεν παρελθεῖν αὐτούς). This line is odd and indeed strange: why would the Markan Jesus want to pass by the disciples? Why not join them in the boat? Since there is no explicit rationale given, a gap is created that cues the audience to infer their own answer. For those familiar with Exodus LXX, which will have already been fresh in the minds of some audience members based on the previous episode (6:30–44), the Markan Jesus acts as Yahweh did in Exod 33:17–34:8 LXX where his desire to “pass by” (παρέρχομαι) Moses is thrice repeated (33:19; 33:22; 34:6).

Most provocative is the fact that Exod 33:19 LXX combines this “passing by” with the revelation of the divine name, just as in Mark 6:48–50:<sup>205</sup> “I will pass by (παρελεύσομαι) before you in my glory, and I will call by my name, ‘Lord’ (κύριος), before you.” Strikingly, as the Markan Jesus is “passing by” the disciples on the boat, he calls out to them, “It is I” (ἐγώ εἰμι) (Mark 6:50). While it would be natural to take ἐγώ εἰμι to function as a straightforward self-referential, “It’s me!”<sup>206</sup> the characterization to this point—not to mention the immediate context in which theophany at Sinai looms so large—suggests that listeners ought to search for a deeper meaning, couched in *emphasis*. In this case, the ἐγώ εἰμι in Mark 6:50 stands in for the κύριος in Exod 33:19 and 34:6 LXX. This exchange is natural enough since in Exodus 3:14, the Hebrew rendering of the divine name, אהיה אשר אהיה, is translated ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὢν in the LXX.

203 So also Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 333; Boring, *Mark*, 189; Donahue and Harrington, *Mark*, 213; Marcus, *Mark* 1–8, 432.

204 On this amalgamation, see Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 333.

205 So also, e.g., Marcus, *Mark* 1–8, 426; Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 334. Cf. The theophany to Elijah in 1 Kgs 19:11.

206 So Decker, *Mark* 1–8, 177.



Hartvigsen (and Lührmann before her) has objected that, in Exod 3:14 LXX, the divine name is actually, ὁ ὢν, not, ἐγώ εἰμι.<sup>207</sup> However, as Yarbro Collins has pointed out, ἐγώ εἰμι is regularly used to refer to the God of Israel (cf. Deut 32:39; Isa 41:4 LXX).<sup>208</sup> Moreover, given the other allusive language for Yahweh (especially in the context of the exodus) to this point, it is doubtful whether such syntactical niceties, even if accepted, would pose a problem for the activation of Jesus's assimilation to Yahweh. Yet those who did not immediately hear an allusion to the divine name may only detect one upon later reflection in the context of the totality of the characterization of *kyriotic* sonship. Whether audience members catch the *emphasis* during the performance or at a later time, this seemingly innocuous self-reference scoops up divine connotations when placed in the epiphanic context of Mark 6:45–52 so evocative of the exodus.<sup>209</sup>

Third, the entire scene at sea is saturated in the Markan Jesus's compassion upon his loved ones, whom he sees in such a dangerous situation. Given the other hooks in the narrative, this compassion may activate the compassion of Yahweh from similar Jewish scripts, including his self-revelation on Sinai (Mark 6:48; cf. Exod 33:19 LXX). Fourth and finally, the narrator's commentary in 6:51–52 ties this episode back to the feeding story, which described the Markan Jesus with allusive language for Yahweh (6:35–44). As the Markan Jesus climbs in the boat the wind ceases, implying obedience to the one who bears the divine name (6:51a). Further, the only reason the disciples were astounded by what had happened (evidently they should have expected it) is that they had failed to understand the loaves, which insinuated that Mark's Jesus ought to be understood in terms previously reserved for Yahweh (6:51–52; cf. 6:30–44).

Beavis has objected to such a divine construal, remarking that, "as with the first sea miracle, it is important not to project later doctrines about the divinity of Christ onto Mark's Jesus, who is shown as praying to God at the beginning of the story (6:46), and not as divine himself."<sup>210</sup> Certainly, Beavis is correct that we ought to avoid importing later orthodox Christology into Mark's Gospel.

207 Hartvigsen, *Prepare*, 271–72; Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, 122.

208 Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 335.

209 As Yarbro Collins (*Mark*, 335) notes, "Those in the audience who had grasped the assimilation of Jesus to God in this passage and who were familiar with the passages cited here from Deuteronomy and Isaiah in which 'It is I' or 'I am' (ἐγώ εἰμι) functions as a divine name or quality may have understood the experience of Jesus in similar terms." Yarbro Collins goes on to acknowledge that picking up on the specific intertexts would not be requisite for understanding the portrait of Jesus as divine here.

210 Beavis, *Mark*, 108.



However, as we have seen, there is substantial warrant to part ways with Beavis on the question of whether audience members will have concluded that Mark's Jesus is a divine being. While one should not appeal to later christological confessions, the narrative does seem at pains to encourage the assimilation of Jesus to Yahweh.

This portrait fits with what we have seen embedded in the text from the prologue onwards, and the characterization of Mark's Jesus is growing bolder and bolder as the narrative develops.<sup>211</sup> While the Gospel of Mark never explicitly calls Jesus divine, the rhetoric of inference allows, even encourages, audience members to make this connection themselves. Since nothing is made explicit, fully grasping the *kyriotic* insinuations requires either anticipation—based on previous hints, inferences, or prior knowledge—further narrative cues, or, ultimately focused reflection after the performance has stopped. As the public reading marches on, this slow, deliberate rhetorical program continues as audience members keep trying to make sense of these subtle, but ever-present, *kyriotic* elements.

### “Who Do You Say that I Am?” (Mark 8:27–33)

Many scholars have treated the scene at Caesarea Philippi as the midpoint of Mark's Gospel<sup>212</sup> and understandably so because the episode contains the first testimony that the Markan Jesus is the “Christ” or the “Messiah” since the narrator's own use of the title in 1:1. The scene also contains the first so-called “passion prediction” (8:31), which unquestionably turns a corner in the narrative that now heads toward Jerusalem, a journey that will end in the full and final demonstration of *kyriotic* sonship.

Our scene begins with a question Jesus poses to his disciples: “Who do people say that I am?” (τίνα με λέγουσιν οἱ ἄνθρωποι εἶναι;) The question invites reflection among both the disciples and the audience members on the characterization of Jesus. The disciples respond to the query by suggesting what *others* say: John, Elijah, or perhaps one of the prophets. These responses parade, in order, the figures for whom the Markan Jesus was mistaken earlier in 6:14–15. Both the order and specific characters listed as potential analogues to the Markan Jesus are striking when this datum is combined with the allusive language that

<sup>211</sup> Cf. 1:3, 8, 10; 2:1–12, 28; 4:35–41; 5:19–20; 6:30–44.

<sup>212</sup> E.g., most recently, Robyn Whitaker, “Rebuke or Recall? Rethinking the Role of Peter in Mark's Gospel,” *CBQ* 75 (2013): 670. See also Gregg S. Morrison, *The Turning Point in the Gospel of Mark: A Study in Markan Christology* (Eugene, Ore.: Pickwick, 2014).

we have seen thus far leveraged in the Markan presentation of Jesus. Jesus has thus far been compared to—and surpassed—John (1:7–8), Elijah-Elisha, and Moses (6:30–44). This initial response from the disciples provides an impetus for perceptive audience members to recall the entire narrative thus far—however briefly—noting the christological insinuations along the way. The perlocutionary force is thus to impress upon those in the audience that, while Mark's Jesus may be *like* these figures, he most certainly should not be *identified* with any of them; indeed, he outstrips each of them.

Jesus then poses a follow-up question to the disciples, which naturally extends to those in the audience identifying with them.<sup>213</sup> This well-placed query gets to the heart of the narrative portrait of Jesus in Mark's Gospel: ὑμεῖς δὲ τίνα με λέγετε εἶναι;<sup>214</sup> (8:29). Audience members, along with the disciples, are immediately prompted to ponder Jesus's characterization afresh.

Peter responds quickly with a formula that is growing increasingly familiar: "You are the Christ!" (σὺ εἶ ὁ χριστός).<sup>215</sup> The line is obviously reminiscent of the testimonies already uttered on behalf of Mark's Jesus in 1:11 (σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱὸς μου) and 3:11 (σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ), as well as the all-important questions set before the Markan Jesus and the audience in 14:61 (σὺ εἶ ὁ χριστός ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ εὐλογητοῦ;) and 15:2 (σὺ εἶ ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων).<sup>216</sup> However, the fact that Peter so quickly demonstrates that he misunderstands Jesus as a sort of political messiah has led some scholars, such as Oscar Cullmann and James Dunn, to question the validity of Peter's "confession" (8:32).<sup>217</sup> Put another way, is Peter correct when he exclaims, "You are the Christ!"?

Both Cullmann and Dunn are primarily concerned with the fact that, in the first-century context, hopes for a Davidic messiah often took a nationalistic

213 On audience identification with characters in a narrative, see discussion in Oatley, "A Taxonomy," 53–74; Slater, "Entertainment Education," 157–81.

214 The placement of ὑμεῖς is emphatic, drawing a distinction and contrast (*comparatio*) between those outsiders inquired of in 8:27 and the disciples, who are insiders in 8:29. So also Hooker, *Mark*, 202.

215 On the formula, σὺ εἶ + predicate nominative, for testimony in Mark, see 1:11; 3:11; 8:29; 14:61; 15:2 (cf. 1:24; 9:7; 15:39).

216 While each of these testimonies differs in the title used, they are more or less acknowledging the same intimate connection that the Markan Jesus enjoys with the God of Israel in the story world of Mark.

217 See Oscar Cullmann, *Peter: Disciple, Apostle, Martyr*, 2nd ed. (London: SCM, 1962), 178–80; James D. G. Dunn, "The Messianic Secret in Mark," in *The Messianic Secret*, ed. Christopher M. Tuckett (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 126–28. Cf. Theodore J. Weeden, *Mark: Traditions in Conflict* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), 64–69.

turn, which Mark's Gospel rejects.<sup>218</sup> Thus, the argument goes, the "confession" is included here because it actually happened, not because Mark's Gospel approves of it (hence the order to secrecy and the rebuke of Peter). Regardless of what one might conclude about the question of the "intention" of the Markan Peter in 8:31, the narrative itself provides a context far too amenable to the title, ὁ χριστός, for Peter's words to be dismissed entirely.

The narrative has presented Mark's Jesus as the "Christ" from the first line of the prologue (1:1) and, from that point on, we have found hints that the Gospel is leading audience members to infer that Mark's Jesus is, in some authentic sense, linked with David (2:21–28).<sup>219</sup> Moreover, those in the audience with prior exposure to Mark's Gospel will know that the title is used with acceptance later on (cf. 9:41; 14:61–62). Further, as Joachim Gnllka has pointed out, Peter's confession is introduced by the formula, ἀποκριθεὶς λέγει, which usually accompanies weighty and sober pronouncements.<sup>220</sup> Final support for this claim is grounded in the parallelism between Peter's testimony and those found in 1:11 and 3:11. Thus, when Peter, a leading figure in early Christian groups and in Mark's Gospel, offers a testimony concerning Mark's Jesus, the audience would be expected to hear it positively.

Consequently, this testimony forms an *inclusio* with the incipit, where the lector himself hailed Mark's Jesus as the "Christ" before anything else (cf. 1:1). Thus, Davidic shading is added to the *kyriotic* dimensions of the characterization of Jesus, which received emphasis in the first half of Mark's Gospel. Thus, this purely Davidic testimony on the lips of Peter (and the narrator) compensates for the influx of *kyriotic* elements earlier in the narrative.<sup>221</sup> Audience members who have tracked, even imperfectly, with the rhetorical program from the beginning will find further confirmation of *kyriotic* sonship, whereas others may find a forceful rejection of a Davidic portrait that insinuates plans for a literal, violent revolution. In this latter case, the Markan alteration of

218 This rejection is most likely in response to its dangerous socio-political connotations in the time surrounding the destruction of the temple in 70 CE. See below on 10:46–52; 11:1–11; 12:35–37 in Chapter Five. See further "To What Ends the Rhetoric of Inference" in Chapter Seven.

219 In addition, as I have argued above, informed audience members particularly attuned to therapeutic scripts associated with David and his son, Solomon, will have already had these scripts primed and activated even if these scripts were ultimately suppressed in favor of the God-as-healer schema (and related scripts) (cf. 1:21–28; 2:1–12; 3:7–12; 5:1–20). See also, below on Mark 10:46–52.

220 Gnllka, *Markus*, 2:14. Cf. Marcus, *Mark 8–16*, 613. See Mark 3:33; 6:37; 7:28; 9:5, 19; 10:3, 24, 51; 11:14, 22, 29, 33; 12:34–35; 14:48, 60–61; 15:2, 9, 12.

221 Cf. Mark 1:23–28; 2:1–12; 2:23–28; 4:35–41; 5:19–20; 6:30–44; 6:45–52.

Davidic hope will further fuel speculation on the nature of the Davidic elements in the characterization of Mark's Jesus, which the narrative will increasingly and distinctively link to Yahweh.

In either case, the explicit confession of Mark's Jesus as *ὁ χριστός* at the turning point of Mark's Gospel is pivotal, even if it is inadequate inasmuch as it embraces political connotations for the messiah and fails to directly affirm the *kyriotic* dimensions of the characterization of Mark's Jesus.<sup>222</sup> Yet, the Davidic confession, which nevertheless fits like a glove initially worn by the narrator (1:1), prompts sympathetic audience members to infer that the divine portrait of Mark's Jesus casts a Davidic shadow.

While Peter's testimony may not amount to the whole truth about Mark's Jesus, in what it affirms, it affirms very well: Mark's Jesus is a Davidic messiah, who will—rather unexpectedly—embrace a path of suffering that leads to exaltation.<sup>223</sup> When joined with Mark 9:2–13, which presents Jesus in a more divine light, this testimony forms a midpoint in the story and forcefully casts Mark's Jesus as the *kyriotic* Son.<sup>224</sup>

### Testimony and Transfiguration (Mark 9:2–13)

This scene bears striking resemblance to 8:27–33. In both there is a recognition scene (8:27–33; 9:2–8), command to silence (8:30; 9:9), misunderstanding on the part of the disciples (8:32–33; 9:5–6, 10–11), and teaching about the suffering “Son of Humanity” (8:31–32; 9:12–13).<sup>225</sup> The close link between the two scenes, despite their very different, though complementary, portraits

222 Perhaps this latter issue is why the author of Matthew's Gospel has made the divine aspects of Jesus's characterization clear by changing Peter's confession to “You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God!” (σὺ εἶ ὁ χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ζῶντος) (Matt 16:16).

223 In this way, it is similar to Bartimaeus's acclamation of the Markan Jesus as “the Son of David;” see below. For a deconstructive reading of Mark's use of “Christ” vis-à-vis “Son of Humanity,” see Paul Danove, “The Rhetoric of the Characterization of Jesus as the Son of Man and Christ in Mark,” *Bib* 84 (2003): 16–34. Danove's conclusions are not at all incompatible with this study—though he arrives by another way—in that the audience is led to adopt the narrative's particular understanding of “Christ” in place of whatever prior understanding they might have held.

224 Similarly, Morrison, *Turning Point*. However, Morrison's presentation of the narrative christology underestimates characterization of Mark's Jesus in terms reserved for God from the prologue onwards. In other words, the development of Jesus's characterization in Mark is not as clean as one might think from Morrison's analysis.

225 Beavis, *Mark*, 135.

of Jesus, further supports the thesis that audience members would be led to infer *kyriotic* sonship; schemas and scripts associated with a Davidic messiah (8:27–31) are joined with those for the Lord of that messiah (9:2–8). We begin with a brief survey of previous approaches to the transfiguration.

### *A Brief Survey of Previous Approaches to the Transfiguration*

There has been a remarkable amount written on the portrait of Mark's Jesus arising from the transfiguration.<sup>226</sup> In the first half of the twentieth century, German scholarship, of which Ernst Lohmeyer is representative, held that non-Jewish Hellenistic traditions informed the episode. These traditions worked together to portray Mark's Jesus as a divine being, who, having initially concealed his divine status, now reveals it to a select group of disciples.<sup>227</sup> Scholarship has largely shifted since that time to include streams of Jewish tradition, often arguing, as Adela Yarbro Collins and Candida Moss have, that the divine glory of the Markan Jesus in the transfiguration proleptically foreshadows the glory he will receive at his resurrection.<sup>228</sup>

Daniel Johansson and—most recently—David Litwa have each contended that the streams of Jewish tradition and those of Greek and Roman memory ultimately flow to the same pool in that they both portray Mark's Jesus as a

226 For a review of the major interpretive options and their proponents, see Simon S. Lee, *Jesus' Transfiguration and the Believers' Transformation: A Study of the Transfiguration and Its Development in Early Christian Writings*, WUNT 2/265 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 9–10. Cf. D. Zeller, "Bedeutung und religionsgeschichtlicher Hintergrund der Verwandlung Jesu (Markus 9:2–8)," in *Authenticating the Activities of Jesus*, ed. Bruce D. Chilton and Craig A. Evans (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 303 n. 1.

227 Ernst Lohmeyer, "Die Verklärung Jesu nach dem Markus-Evangelium," *ZNW* 21 (1922): 185–215.

228 Adela Yarbro Collins, "Mark and His Readers: The Son of God among Greeks and Romans," *HTR* 93.2 (2000): 90–92; Candida R. Moss, "The Transfiguration: An Exercise in Markan Accommodation," *BibInt* 12 (2004): 69–89. Cf. Adela Yarbro Collins, "Mark and His Readers: The Son of God among Jews," *HTR* 92.4 (1999): 400–01. See also, Howard C. Kee, "The Transfiguration in Mark: Epiphany or Apocalyptic Vision?," in *Understanding the Sacred Text*, ed. John Henry Paul Reumann (Valley Forge: Judson, 1972), 135–52; Rudolf Pesch, *Das Markusevangelium: Kommentar zu Kap. 8,27–16,20*, vol. 2, 2 vols., HTKNT 2 (Freiburg: Herder, 1991), 72–74; Jack Dean Kingsbury, *The Christology of Mark's Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1983), 99; Barry Blackburn, *Theios Anēr and the Markan Miracle Traditions: A Critique of the Theios Anēr Concept as an Interpretative Background of the Miracle Traditions Used by Mark*, WUNT 2.40 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1991), 117–24; John Paul Heil, *The Transfiguration of Jesus: Narrative Meaning and Function of Mark 9:2–8, Matt 17:1–8 and Luke 9:28–36*, AnBib 144 (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 2000), 92.

divine being.<sup>229</sup> As insightful as these studies are, they routinely neglect the oral/aural performance experience, which allows for a multiplicity of meanings within a single audience. Thus, in what follows, I approach the question of the characterization of Mark's Jesus in the transfiguration from the vantage point of the audience's oral/aural experience of the Gospel. To preview the outcome, a multiplicity of images would be cued for the audience, including streams evoking ideas of divinity and those insinuating coming suffering and resurrection. While some will infer these aspects based on the matrix of scripts evoked from Jewish and Hellenistic cultural memory—assisted by previous insinuations and inferences from earlier in the narrative—others will not make the connection until the passion where David's Lord is ironically exalted as David's "son."

### *Cues to Mark's Jesus as a Divine Being*

Some in the audience will probably conclude that the episode presents Mark's Jesus as a divine being walking the earth.<sup>230</sup> The scene begins high on an unidentified mountain, upon which Jesus brings only a select group of disciples (Peter, James, and John). Mountains themselves are often associated with theophany, making the setting for this episode particularly suitable.<sup>231</sup> Once on the mountain, the Markan Jesus is transfigured (μετεμορφώθη) before their eyes (9:2). The supernatural whiteness of his garments (9:2–3) can imply divine glory (see below), and the verb used to depict the garment as "shining" (στίλβω) is also used in the description of the god Helios riding on his chariot.<sup>232</sup>

This depiction of the Markan Jesus understandably catches Peter, James, and John off guard. However, the audience has known from the prologue that Mark's Jesus is intimately related to God in ways that would press beyond the porous boundaries of divinity in the Roman world.<sup>233</sup> Most importantly for our purposes, recall that, for some members of the audience, the Greek traditions of the visitation of gods-in-disguise would likely be activated at the baptism where the Spirit descended *into* the Markan Jesus.<sup>234</sup> If the baptism is activated

229 Johansson, "Jesus and God in Mark," 122–40; Litwa, *Iesus Deus*, 111–40.

230 So also Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 426.

231 Cf. Exod 24:15–16; 25:8–9 LXX. Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 417–18, 21.

232 Hom. Hymn 31 ad Hel. 10–13, noted in Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 421–22. Cf. Exod 34:29–35 LXX; 1 En. 106.2–6; Apoc. Zeph. 9.1–5; Liv. Pro. 21; Philo, *Virtues* 39 §217; Rev 3:4; 7:9. Cf. Beavis, *Mark*, 135.

233 See above on Mark 1:2–3, 7–8, 9–11, 12–13; 2:1–12; 4:35–41; 5:19–20; 6:30–44, 45–52. On the notion of divinity and divine sonship in the Roman world, see Peppard, *Son of God*, 31–85.

234 See Chapter Three above on Mark 1:10. For further discussion on "metamorphosis" in the ancient Mediterranean world, see Pamela E. Kinlaw, *The Christ Is Jesus: Metamorphosis, Possession, and Johannine Christology* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 15–40.

for these audience members, they will likely interpret the transfiguration along similar lines: Jesus's true form as a divine being is revealed on the mountain. In addition, the term μετεμορφώθη may activate related streams of Greek cultural memory, supporting the conclusion that Jesus is cast as a god-in-disguise.<sup>235</sup>

Those more familiar with Jewish schemas and scripts will most likely be led down a similar path. Audience members for whom the dazzling white garment activates Yahweh's theophanic divine glory may interpret the depiction of the Markan Jesus as a divine being.<sup>236</sup> Initially concealed at his baptism, his divine status is at last being revealed. Support for this conclusion has been marshaled at length by Johansson, who argues that the most fundamental reason both Elijah and Moses are chosen for this mountaintop scene in Mark is that both figures conversed with Yahweh on a mountain in the Jewish Scriptures.<sup>237</sup> Indeed, Moses is covered by a cloud (ἡ νεφέλη) from Yahweh as the glory of the Lord descended upon the mountain (Exod 24:15–18; cf. 34:4–8 LXX; Mark 9:7). And Elijah appears before the Lord on a mountain in a manner dependent upon Exod 33–34 (cf. 1 Kgs 19:8–18 LXX). If scripts related to these episodes are cued, the mountain in Mark 9:2 will be viewed as a new Sinai.<sup>238</sup> When this location is combined with the fact that Elijah and Moses converse with the Markan Jesus and not Yahweh himself, some audience members will probably conclude that Jesus fills the role originally cast for the deity of Jewish cultural memory. The divine injunction to “listen to him” underscores this substitution all the more (cf. 9:7).<sup>239</sup>

Therefore, rather than confining the resulting portrait of Mark's Jesus to one meaning in 9:2–10, we are better served to allow for diversity within our diverse audience. As before, not all careful listeners will recognize all of this allusive language at this point. While some will be quick enough, others will need more time to make sense of the scene. Nevertheless, this scene is the most explicit thus far among the heavily *kyriot* episodes—not least because these very scenes will have helped lead audience members toward a divine portrait at the transfiguration. Put another way, the cumulative effect of these individual episodes creates mounting support for the assimilation of the Markan Jesus to God.

235 E.g., Homer *Od.* 17 485–487; Hesiod *Hymn to Demeter* 101, 118–122. Cf. Yarbro Collins, “The Son of God among Greeks and Romans,” 91.

236 E.g., Exod 34:29–35 LXX; 1 En. 106.2–6; Apoc. Zeph. 9.1–5; Philo, *Virtues* 39 §217; Rev 3:4; 7:9.

237 Johansson, “Jesus and God in Mark,” 129.

238 Hooker, *Mark*, 216.

239 Similarly, Johansson, “Jesus and God in Mark,” 130.



*Cues to the Coming Passion and Resurrection*

If the brightness of the dazzling white garment activates the hope for resurrection,<sup>240</sup> the injunction to keep silent until the “Son of Humanity” has been raised from the dead will only solidify this notion. After all, the Markan Jesus is standing and conversing with two illustrious figures in Jewish cultural memory, who have passed on to the other side.<sup>241</sup> This emphasis on resurrection would gain all the more traction if the cloud that descended upon the mountain triggers the streams of Jewish traditions pertaining to the translations of Elijah and Moses.<sup>242</sup> These eschatological prophets were believed to have escaped death through a cloud from God that carried them to paradise. Similarly, a cloud overshadows the three glorious beings, yet when the cloud lifts, only the Markan Jesus remains (Mark 9:8). No further explanation is given, leaving a gap in the story, which audience members must fill, based on the narrative thus far and what follows.

While the gap may stand unfilled until later reflection, if the schemas and scripts associated with translation stories are activated for careful listeners, the fact that the Markan Jesus remains behind, resisting translation, may focus their attention on the importance of his suffering, death, and resurrection.<sup>243</sup> This inference would be confirmed by the repetition of resurrection language (9:9, 10) and the repetition of the necessity of suffering for the Markan Jesus via the “Son of Humanity” passion predictions (9:12; cf. 8:31). Indeed, those focusing on suffering and resurrection will likely understand the divine injunction to “listen to him” (9:7) to refer first and foremost to the initial so-called “passion prediction” in 8:31.<sup>244</sup> However, Hartvigsen is probably correct that, at least ultimately, this divine directive “will apply to every speech act voiced by Jesus

240 The hope for bright dazzling bodies at the resurrection is rooted in Dan 12:3 LXX, which uses content addressable terms for the dazzling quality of the bodies, which are likened to bright celestial bodies (οἱ συνιέντες φανοῦσιν ὡς φωστῆρες τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ οἱ κατισχύοντες τοὺς λόγους μου ὥστε τὰ ἄστρα τοῦ οὐρανοῦ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος).

241 Moss, “Transfiguration,” 73.

242 On the translation of Elijah, see Josephus *Ant.* 9.2.2 §28. On the translation of Moses, see Josephus *Ant.* 4.8.45 §§325–326. Cf. Moloney, *Mark*, 179; Beavis, *Mark*, 134–37. On other translation stories, see Virgil, *Aen.* 3:380–381; 1 En. 14:8; Acts 1:9; 1 Thess 4:17; Rev 11:12. Cf. Marcus, *Mark 8–16*, 634; Markus Öhler, “Die Verklärung (Mk 9:1–8): die Ankunft der Herrschaft Gottes auf der Erde,” *NovT* 38 (1996): 210–11. On translations in Greco-Roman tradition, see Bolt, *Jesus’ Defeat of Death*, 220–24.

243 Bolt, *Jesus’ Defeat of Death*, 220–24.

244 Similarly, Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 426.

in the Markan world.”<sup>245</sup> Moreover, certain aspects of the divine testimony itself may activate the passion and resurrection.

In 9:7, Peter, James, and John—and those in the audience—receive divine testimony to the sonship of Mark’s Jesus. For the first time since his baptism, the concealed identity of Mark’s Jesus is dramatically and explicitly revealed through dazzling light and divine verbal testimony to a select few. Indeed, Yarbrow Collins does not overstate importance of the testimony when she notes that, “From the point of view of traditional Greek religion, the identification of Jesus in this scene as God’s son is equivalent to identifying him as a divine being.”<sup>246</sup> In addition to the broad Mediterranean notion of the visitation of gods-in-disguise, we can expect those familiar with the Jewish Scriptures to have scripts related to Ps 2:7 LXX and Gen 22:2, 12, 16 LXX primed or activated to varying degrees. For those whose minds were drawn to scripts related to Gen 22 LXX, the testimony that the Markan Jesus is “my son, the beloved” may also activate the traditions of the near-sacrifice of Isaac. Yet, it must be admitted that, just as with the testimony at the baptism, any allusive language to Isaac is so deeply embedded and the performance so unrelenting that very few will pick up on it, especially during the actual performance. However, the final moments of this episode will offer more than enough fodder to direct the audience to the passion and resurrection of Mark’s divine protagonist.

The final section of this episode (9:9–13) focuses on the coming of the eschatological Elijah and the coming passion and resurrection of the Son of Humanity. For our purposes, it is most important to focus on the question issued by the Markan Jesus in 9:12b. Responding to their concern about whether Elijah comes before the “Son of Humanity,” Jesus says to Peter, James, and John,

Elijah does indeed come first, and restores all things. And why is it written that the Son of Humanity must suffer many things and be despised? But I tell you that Elijah has certainly come and they did to him whatever they wanted, just as it is written about him.<sup>247</sup>

The question in 9:12b, “And why is it written that the Son of Humanity must suffer many things and be despised?” is sandwiched into lines otherwise

<sup>245</sup> Hartvigsen, *Prepare*, 324.

<sup>246</sup> Yarbrow Collins, “The Son of God among Greeks and Romans,” 92.

<sup>247</sup> Ἡλίας μὲν ἐλθὼν πρῶτον ἀποκαθιστάνει πάντα· καὶ πῶς γέγραπται ἐπὶ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἵνα πολλὰ πάθῃ καὶ ἐξουδενηθῇ; ἀλλὰ λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι καὶ Ἡλίας ἐλήλυθεν, καὶ ἐποίησαν αὐτῷ ὅσα ᾔθελον, καθὼς γέγραπται ἐπ’ αὐτόν.

focused on Elijah. This unanswered question creates a gap regarding the rationale for Jesus's passion and resurrection, and, as such, it stimulates audience reflection. The divine testimony commanding that they (the audience) listen to the Markan Jesus only heightens the dilemma created by this most important unanswered question. While some answers will be made explicit in the narrative to come, at this point, no answer is forthcoming.<sup>248</sup>

*Summary of 9:2–13 and the Narrative Significance of 8:27–9:13*

Many in the audience would have understood the Markan Jesus as a divine being at the transfiguration. Moreover, such a conclusion—especially at the story's midpoint—would support taking hints from earlier episodes as thoroughly *kyriotic*.<sup>249</sup> For many in the audience, this scene would recall the Spirit's possession of the Markan Jesus at his baptism (1:10), just as the divine testimony uttered from the cloud points back to the baptism's heavenly voice (1:11). As such, the Markan Jesus is greater than either Elijah or Moses, a glory that would be accentuated for those in the audience who infer that he resists the offer of translation in acceptance of the necessity of his coming passion and resurrection (cf. 9:9–13). Yet even for those who do not have the translation stories primed or activated and thus available for sense making, the portrait of the Markan Jesus cloaked in a dazzling white garment may cue thoughts of his post-resurrection existence, pointing the audience toward the story's end at its crucial midpoint. Why this great and glorious being will undergo suffering and death is left unanswered.

It is difficult to miss the significance of the portrait of Mark's Jesus that is confirmed at the story's midpoint by twin testimonies from Peter (8:28) and God (9:7). On the one hand, the narrative affirms for the audience that Mark's Jesus is a new sort of Davidic messiah, whose role avoids political connotations in favor of suffering and death. On the other hand, the transfiguration—of which the divine testimony is the centerpiece—portrays Mark's Jesus as a divine being, now standing in for the God of Israel, conversing with Elijah and Moses upon the new Sinai. Since the twin testimonies in 8:27–9:13 form the turning point of Mark's Gospel,<sup>250</sup> they point both forward and backward, confirming the characterization of Mark's Jesus as the *kyriotic* Son to this point in the story, as well as beyond it. Just as Jesus is cloaked in a dazzling white robe in the transfiguration, Mark 8:27–9:13 cloaks the entire narrative in *kyriotic* sonship.

<sup>248</sup> See below on 12:35–37; cf. 10:45.

<sup>249</sup> See above on Mark 1:2–3, 7–8, 9–11, 12–13; 2:1–12; 4:35–41; 5:19–20; 6:30–44, 45–52.

<sup>250</sup> Morrison, *Turning Point*, 98–164.

As we reach the turning point in the narrative, the portrait of Mark's Jesus as the *kyriotic* Son has been foregrounded through the (mostly) subtle rhetoric of inference. Yet, as the narrative approaches the passion so too will the rhetoric become bolder in its characterization, offering fodder for further reflection on previous episodes. In particular, Mark 10:46–12:37 focuses on the Davidic elements of *kyriotic* sonship and highlights their connectedness to the *kyriotic* aspects.

### Conclusion

Thus far, we have watched as Mark's Jesus was portrayed in ways that primed and activated scripts associated primarily with divinity, especially Israel's deity. The divine scripts associated with the exercising of authority over unclean spirits, physical infirmities, the wind and waves, as well as those associated with the feeding of God's people in the wilderness, received the most attention in the narrative, while schemas and scripts related to David remained relatively downplayed, though nevertheless present. However, at the turning point of the Gospel, Peter's testimony that Mark's Jesus is *ὁ χριστός* will have strongly activated the Davidic king schema and related scripts, in concert with a strong activation of divine scripts at the transfiguration, including those associated with Yahweh conversing on a mountain with Moses and Elijah from Jewish tradition. The result is a symmetrical presentation of the quintessence of *kyriotic* sonship unlike anything we have seen thus far. The narrative position of the juxtaposition of these two episodes forms a hinge that looks back on the narrative to this point, as well as ahead, shading the entire Gospel in *kyriotic* sonship.

If the *kyriotic* dimensions have received most activation to this point in the narrative, the most relevant episodes from Mark 9:14–13:37 focus attention more heavily (though by no means exclusively) on the schemas and scripts associated with David. It is to these episodes that we now turn.

## The Narrative Development of *Kyriotic* Sonship, Part 2 (9:14–13:37)

This chapter only attends to the most important episodes that inform *kyriotic* sonship in Mark 9:14–13:37. This means that our attention must focus on Mark 10:46–12:37.<sup>1</sup> For many in the audience, schemas and scripts associated with David will be selected in ways that subtly affirm *kyriotic* sonship while cleverly avoiding political associations; this is part of a larger concern to clarify *kyriotic* sonship in 10:46–12:37. However, before we get to this important section, we need to address an element that could form an objection to the *kyriotic* side of the characterization of Jesus as articulated thus far.

### Only the “One God” is Good? (Mark 10:17–22)

Before we turn to Mark 10:46–12:37, 10:17–22 deserves brief comment since it relates directly to the *kyriotic* sonship of Mark’s Jesus. Some scholars, such as Rhoads, Dewey, and Michie, have argued that this episode presents a clear instance in which Mark’s Jesus is not God, but rather subordinate to him.<sup>2</sup> After all, it seems rather self-evident that, as Yarbro Collins aptly puts it, “the Markan Jesus shows his modesty and piety by not claiming for himself qualities or prerogatives that belong to God alone.”<sup>3</sup> As we have already seen, some audience members may view the Markan Jesus as making a habit of deflecting honor and redirecting it toward God (cf. 5:19). However, even these audience members may notice that the narrator offers subtle suggestions that the

1 Thus, texts like Mark 12:1–12 and 13:37, despite their obvious relevance to Davidic (the temple and eschatological upheaval) and divine (the invocation of κύριος and the divine name) schemas and scripts, will not receive extensive discussion.

2 David Rhoads, Joanna Dewey, and Donald Michie, *Mark As Story: An Introduction to the Narrative of a Gospel*, 3rd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 107. Cf. John Paul Heil, *The Gospel of Mark as Model for Action: A Reader-Response Commentary* (New York: Paulist, 1992), 207–08; Maurice Casey, *From Jewish Prophet to Gentile God: The Origins and Development of New Testament Christology* (Cambridge: James Clarke, 1991), 70; Javier-José Marín, *The Christology of Mark: Does Mark’s Christology Support the Chalcedonian Formula “Truly Man and Truly God”?*, EUSS 23.417 (Bern: Peter Lang, 1991), 99–100.

3 Adela Yarbro Collins, *Mark: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 477.

humility of the Markan Jesus should not prevent a characterization that likens him to Yahweh (cf. 5:20).<sup>4</sup> We find the potential for a similar pattern in what follows in Mark 10:17–22.

When addressed as “good teacher” (διδάσκαλε ἀγαθέ) and asked about the requirements for eternal life, the Markan Jesus first replies to the issue of his assumed goodness: τί με λέγεις ἀγαθόν; οὐδείς ἀγαθός εἰ μὴ εἷς ὁ θεός (10:18). On the surface, the Markan Jesus clearly and indisputably differentiates himself from the God of Israel, who alone deserves the epithet, “good.” However, the narrator lets the question hang unanswered for the audience and what follows offers hints that those experiencing the episode are supposed to resist a straightforward differentiation between the Markan Jesus and God.

Questions have thus far been an incisive rhetorical tool that have beckoned those in the audience to ponder questions posed to characters in the story.<sup>5</sup> As focused listeners process the relative goodness of Mark’s Jesus vis-à-vis God, he acts in ways that cue his *synkristic* assimilation to Yahweh. First, he demonstrates godlike knowledge of what specific commandment that the young man lacks (10:21a). Second, that the Markan Jesus demonstrates his love by teaching the young man the commandment that he lacks may trigger scripts derived from the Jewish Scriptures in which God’s love for Israel was demonstrated in his giving of the Law (10:21a).<sup>6</sup> Third, the man’s question regarding the necessary requirements for eternal life finds its ultimate answer in following the Markan Jesus (10:21b).

So, while Jesus shows a degree of hesitancy with the implications of the young man’s address, the narrator presents him as demonstrating divine knowledge of a man, whom he loves as God loved Israel, ultimately placing the command to follow him as the threshold to eternal life. Put another way, if the Markan Jesus is *not* good, then how can he, like God, discern the secret condition of this young man’s heart and offer him eternal life on the basis on following him? Fourth, the phrase οὐδείς ἀγαθός εἰ μὴ εἷς ὁ θεός may activate the internal query of the scribes that τίς δύναται ἀφιέναι ἁμαρτίας εἰ μὴ εἷς ὁ θεός; in

4 See further on 5:1–20 in Chapter Four above.

5 Cf. Mark 1:24; 1:27; 2:7; 2:9; 4:40; 4:41; 8:27; 8:29. This is the case irrespective of whether or not the line is directly addressed to the audience from within the story world. See further on “Inference Generation in Ancient Rhetorical Theory” in Chapter Two above.

6 Cf. Philo, *Decalogue* 176, noted in Rudolf Pesch, *Das Markusevangelium: Kommentar zu Kap. 8,27–16,20*, vol. 2, 2 vols., HTKNT 2 (Freiburg: Herder, 1991), 137. See also the Second Benediction of the *Shema*, which probably dates to the Second Temple period, noted in, Joel Marcus, *Mark 8–16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 27A (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 726.

2:7 in the minds of some hearers. In 2:7, the narrator used the scribal objection to communicate a subtle assimilation of Jesus to God; might the same thing be happening here?

Thus, the narrator's report of the "godlike power"<sup>7</sup> of the Markan Jesus, described using allusive language which may activate the comparison with God (10:21), is set in tension with Jesus's own injunction that only the "one God" is good (10:18). While the unity of God will come up again in the story, the tension between the sole goodness of the God and the godlike powers of the Markan Jesus is not resolved at this stage.<sup>8</sup>

While the Markan Jesus is adamant that "no one is good except the one God," perceptive members of the audience may not be so sure. However, he has been portrayed with compelling—however subtle—lines of association with God to this point in the narrative. This link prompts an important question: why does the narrative carefully distinguish Mark's Jesus from God at this point? This episode, in which the Markan Jesus emphasizes the unique goodness of the "one God" serves as a narrative qualification to the building assimilation of Mark's Jesus to God. While Mark's Jesus is assimilated to Yahweh, the two characters nevertheless remain distinct in Mark's story world: Jesus may act like Yahweh—and even stand in for the deity in heretofore-unfamiliar ways—but the two remain distinct.

The same device is found in 12:28–34, in which the Markan Jesus sets forth the *Shema* as the greatest commandment in anticipation of 12:35–37, which boldly and unflinchingly presents Mark's Jesus as a second κύριος. Thus, in the story world, just as Mark's Jesus is not literally to be equated with David, he is not literally to be equated with Yahweh. Nevertheless, the characterization of *kyriotic* sonship assimilates him to both figures within the narrative. It is a fine line to walk, which is likely why episodes like 10:17–22 and 12:28–34 are placed where they are. In other words, the hesitancy of Jesus to God-associations late in the narrative significantly delimits (though by no means derails) the *kyriotic* implications of the rhetoric of inference that was foregrounded so strongly earlier on.

With the *kyriotic* relationship qualified, the Davidic elements now come into greater and more precise focus for audience members over the course of 10:46–12:37. It is to this section that we may now turn.

<sup>7</sup> Marcus, *Mark* 8–16, 726.

<sup>8</sup> See below on 12:35–37; cf. 12:28–34.



### Clarifying the Nature of *Kyriotic* Sonship in Mark's Gospel (10:46–12:37)

Over the course of Mark 10:46–12:37, the narrative significantly clarifies the nature of the Davidic sonship attributed to Mark's Jesus. Mark 10:46–52 confirms the therapeutic aspects of the *synkristic* relationship between Mark's Jesus and David by explicitly affirming the Davidic sonship of Mark's Jesus in the context of a healing story. In contrast, Mark 11:1–11 focuses predominantly on its royal contours, while eschewing revolutionary or political aspects sometimes associated with Davidic figures.<sup>9</sup> Taken together, these two episodes set the *synkristic* relationship with David directly before the audience where their suspicions, formed on the basis of prior innuendo and insinuation, may be confirmed. With the Davidic relationship firmly in place, Mark 12:35–37 sets the two major streams of assimilation squarely before the audience and prompts reflection on how it is that the Markan Jesus, the Messiah, can be both David's Lord and David's "son." The answer will not come until it is dramatically depicted in the passion.

While much is left unanswered at this point, these three episodes encourage the audience along the path begun in the prologue and carried through the narrative thus far: Mark's Jesus is David's "son" in a royal and therapeutic fashion, but he is also David's Lord, worthy of a *synkristic* assimilation to the God of Israel. We begin with Mark 10:46–52.

#### *The Merciful Son of David (Mark 10:46–52)*

In scholarly reflection on the relationship between the Markan Jesus and the Son of David, the healing of blind Bartimaeus has featured prominently since it is one of the only two passages where the title "Son of David" is used in Mark's Gospel.<sup>10</sup> In what follows, it will be argued that Bartimaeus's cries, "Jesus, Son of David!" (10:47), and "Son of David, have mercy on me!" (10:48), would very likely be heard as a fitting, even if incomplete, epithet for Mark's Jesus. While Mark's Jesus is far more than the Son of David, he is nevertheless his "son." Moreover, once the fitting nature of the title is secured, it will be important to entertain what specifically this episode adds to the notion of Davidic sonship

9 It will also use *emphasis* to tap into the *synkristic* relationship between the Markan Jesus and Yahweh in 11:3.

10 The other being Mark 12:35–37 (on which, see below). This scholarly focus is notwithstanding the fact that, as this study has demonstrated, Mark's Jesus enjoys a *synkristic* relationship with David (and his son) throughout the narrative, beginning in the prologue (cf. 1:1, 11, 12–13).

in Mark's Gospel. We begin with some common arguments against the validity of the title "Son of David" placed on the lips of Bartimaeus.

### The Case Against "Son of David"

The arguments against a positive ruling of Bartimaeus's attribution of the title "Son of David" can be distilled thusly.<sup>11</sup> First, as Clifton Black and others have pointed out, when Bartimaeus calls Jesus, "Son of David," he is *blind*, which elsewhere is symbolic of spiritual blindness (8:22–26<sup>12</sup>).<sup>13</sup> Similarly, it is regularly noted that, as Malbon points out, Bartimaeus is *sitting* "on the way" (ἐκάθητο παρὰ τὴν ὁδόν, 10:46); he has yet to actually (and thus symbolically) *follow* Jesus on the way (ἡκολούθει αὐτῷ ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ; 10:52).<sup>14</sup> Relatedly, for Achtemeier, it is telling that, after he finally gains a hearing with Jesus, Bartimaeus hails him by a different title, the formal and reverent, ῥαββουνί (10:51).<sup>15</sup>

These physical shifts from blindness to sight and from sitting to following, Boring and others have urged, symbolize a spiritual shift that takes place in his understanding of Jesus (cf. 1:2–3).<sup>16</sup> In keeping with this line of thinking, Boring has added that Bartimaeus's divestment of his garment signals this shift from erroneous to correct thinking about the Markan Jesus; Bartimaeus metaphorically sheds his previous misunderstanding of Jesus in primarily Davidic terms (10:50).<sup>17</sup> However, these shifts really work better when the episode is viewed in isolation from the rest of the narrative. For those in the audience

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- 11 See, e.g., C. Clifton Black, *Mark*, Abingdon New Testament Commentary (Nashville: Abingdon, 2011), 234; Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, *Mark's Jesus: Characterization as Narrative Christology* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2009), 87–92; M. Eugene Boring, *Mark: A Commentary*, NTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006), 304–07; Richard A. Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story: The Politics of Plot in Mark's Gospel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 251; Ernest Best, *Following Jesus: Discipleship in the Gospel of Mark* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981), 142; Werner H. Kelber, *The Kingdom in Mark: A New Place and a New Time* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974), 95; Gerd Theissen, *Urchristliche Wundergeschichten* (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1974), 146.
  - 12 This passage forms an *inclusio* of blindness with our present passage (10:46–52), which further strengthens the symbolic nature of Bartimaeus's blindness. But see below on the prophetic symbolism of that blindness.
  - 13 Black, *Mark*, 234; Malbon, *Mark's Jesus*, 89; Ernest Best, *Mark: The Gospel as Story* (London: T. & T. Clark, 1983), 142–43; Earl S. Johnson, "Mark 10:46–52: Blind Bartimaeus," *CBQ* 40 (1978): 197.
  - 14 E.g., Malbon, *Mark's Jesus*, 89.
  - 15 Paul J. Achtemeier, "And He Followed Him': Miracles and Discipleship in Mark 10:46–52," *Semeia* 11 (1978): 115.
  - 16 E.g., Boring, *Mark*, 305.
  - 17 Boring, *Mark*, 306. Cf. Marcus, *Mark* 8–16, 761.

experiencing the story as a whole, Mark's Jesus has already been (repeatedly) characterized in Davidic terms, as early as the story's incipit and most recently through the testimony of God (cf. 9:7; 1:11), but also that of Peter (cf. 8:29).<sup>18</sup> This firmly grounded characterization will not be overturned so easily.

Second, it is sometimes argued, as Malbon has, that the narrator's use of Ἰησοῦς ὁ Ναζαρενός (10:47a) can be fruitfully contrasted with Bartimaeus's υἱὲ Δαυὶδ Ἰησοῦ (10:47b).<sup>19</sup> This contrast is thought to find traction in the fact that, as Boring has pointed out, although the Son of David is typically associated with Bethlehem,<sup>20</sup> the Markan Jesus comes from Nazareth.<sup>21</sup> Regardless of the objections of Matt 2:5–6, Luke 2:4, and John 7:42, Mark's Gospel does not seem nearly as concerned as either Malbon or Boring with the Nazarene origins of Jesus as the Davidic Messiah (apart from 10:46–51).

Third, Malbon has argued that the fact that the Markan Jesus initially ignores Bartimaeus's cries for the Son of David may signal for the audience that this man's conception of Jesus is incomplete and inadequate.<sup>22</sup> It is not so much that the Markan Jesus fails to *praise* Bartimaeus for the use of the appellation; rather, it is his initial hesitation to even respond to him that raises questions for Malbon. Yet, this argument from silence could easily be recruited in support of an approval of the title, since the Markan Jesus does ultimately heal Bartimaeus. Moreover, Malbon's assertion that, "it is the action of Bartimaeus and not his initial words that are affirmed,"<sup>23</sup> does not easily square with the effect of the continuous temporal flow of a performance context. It is questionable whether such a differentiation would or could be made during the performance since there would simply not be enough time, and the attention of those in the audience would be focused elsewhere by the rhetorical emphasis on the characterization of the Markan Jesus through inflection (see below). When those in the audience do have time for reflection, they will likely do so in the context of the totality of the portrait of Mark's Jesus from the narrative, which, as we have seen, is thoroughly Davidic.<sup>24</sup>

Fourth, attention is usually drawn to Mark 12:35–37, in which, it is argued, the Markan Jesus denies that the Messiah is David's son. Since Mark 12:35–37

18 On which, see above in Chapter Four.

19 Malbon, *Mark's Jesus*, 62.

20 Cf. Matt 2:5–6; Luke 2:4; John 7:42.

21 Cf. Mark 1:9, 24; 10:47; 14:67; 16:6. Boring, *Mark*, 305.

22 Malbon, *Mark's Jesus*, 148.

23 Malbon, *Mark's Jesus*, 88.

24 For further discussion of the nature of recall and activation of schemas and scripts from cultural memory in the context of an aural experience of a narrative, see Chapter Two.

is discussed at length below, it will not receive treatment in this section. At this point, it must suffice to state that I find such a reading an unsatisfactory rendering of the scene. Fifth, Kingsbury's suggestion that the episode is more about Bartimaeus's great faith than his christology does not do justice to the rhetoric of the episode.<sup>25</sup> Since the name Ἰησοῦς is fully inflected in the narrative,<sup>26</sup> whereas Bartimaeus is only mentioned by name in 10:46 and πίστις is only found in 10:52, the focus is indisputably on the Markan Jesus in the narrative.<sup>27</sup> The repetition of "Son of David" (υἱὸς Δαυὶδ) in 10:47, 48 further focuses the story on the attribution of the title, "Son of David" to the Markan Jesus. Thus, to be sure, the characterization of the Markan Jesus is a central issue in the episode.<sup>28</sup> The arguments above notwithstanding, there are compelling reasons to infer that the title fits the Markan Jesus well, even if it does not by itself reflect an adequate or complete characterization.

### The Case for Bartimaeus as Trustworthy

Given the setting of the episode on the outskirts of Jericho, only twelve miles outside of Jerusalem, and the fact that the speaker is a blind man with an Aramaic patronymic associated with his (albeit Greek) name,<sup>29</sup> it is not at all surprising that the Markan Jesus is hailed using a title with thoroughly Jewish connotations. In other words, the narrative uses *prosopopoeia* (speech-in-character) to have Bartimaeus speak appropriately for the setting and his character.<sup>30</sup> Thus, while the address of the Markan Jesus as "son of David" has seemed odd to some,<sup>31</sup> it is what we (and those in the audience) might expect

25 Jack Dean Kingsbury, *The Christology of Mark's Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1983), 103.

26 Nominative (10:47, 49, 51, 52); genitive (10:46 [×2] [αὐτοῦ]); dative (10:51, 52 [αὐτῷ]); accusative (10:51); vocative (10:47).

27 On the use of inflection to determine the subject, see Theon, *Prog.* 85.29–31; Patillon, *Theon*, 48; Cf. Mikeal C. Parsons, "Luke and the Progymnasmata: A Preliminary Investigation into the Preliminary Exercises," in *Contextualizing Acts: Lukan Narrative and Greco-Roman Discourse*, ed. Todd C. Penner and Caroline Vander Stichele, SBLSymS 20 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 56–61.

28 I do not deny that discipleship is a theme of the story, but rather, in Robbins's words, in 10:46–52, "the christological image of Jesus and the response in discipleship converge" (226). Vernon K. Robbins, "The Healing of Blind Bartimaeus (10:46–52) in the Marcan Theology," *JBL* 92 (1973): 226.

29 Marcus, *Mark* 8–16, 759.

30 On *prosopopoeia*, see, e.g., Theon, *Prog.* 115–118. Cf. Ps-Hermogenes, *Prog.* 20–21.

31 Klaus Berger, "Die königlichen Messiasstraditionen des Neuen Testaments," *NTS* 20 (1973): 1–44, esp. 3 and n. 12.

from a man outside of Jericho. Moreover, as we have seen in previous chapters, David's quintessential son, Solomon, was associated with performing therapeutic miracles, including healing and exorcism in the first century.

Indeed, in the *Testament of Solomon*, the old man's cry, "King Solomon, son of David, have mercy on me, the old man!" // Βασιλεῦ Σολομῶν υἱὸς Δαυεὶδ, ἐλέησόν με τὸ γέρας (T. Sol. 20.1) bears striking resemblance to Bartimaeus's υἱὲ Δαυιδ Ἰησοῦ, ἐλέησόν με (Mark 10:47). It is true that in T. Sol. 20.1, Solomon is asked not to heal blindness or exorcise demons, but to chastise the old man's unruly son. However, the point is not that this particular text from T. Sol. would be activated in the minds of those in the audience, but rather that Bartimaeus's words would likely activate the stream of traditions surrounding Solomon,<sup>32</sup> as the therapeutic son of David.<sup>33</sup> While previous healing activity has probably been understood in light of schemas associated with God-as-healer, the explicit use of a Davidic title would be more than enough for most listeners to select this schema for sense making in this episode.<sup>34</sup> For these listeners, his words form an explicit testimony that the Markan Jesus is the "Son of David." As such, the testimony would be received in a manner similar to the other testimonies concerning Mark's Jesus to this point in the narrative and would be integrated into the portrait formed by them.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, the fact that Jesus's therapeutic activity here and elsewhere does not include the typical hallmarks

32 Cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 8.2.5 §§45–49.

33 So also Dennis C. Duling, "Solomon, Exorcism, and the Son of David," *HTR* 68 (1975): 235–52; Bruce Chilton, "Jesus Ben David: Reflections on the Davidsohnfrage," *JSNT* 14 (1982): 88–112; James H. Charlesworth, "The Son of David: Solomon and Jesus (Mark 10.47)," in *The New Testament and Hellenistic Judaism*, ed. Peder Borge and Søren Giversen (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1995), 72–87; Stephen H. Smith, "The Function of the Son of David Tradition in Mark's Gospel," *NTS* 42 (1996): 523–39; Craig A. Evans, *Mark 8:27–16:20*, WBC 34B (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 130–31. See further Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 510. *Contra* Joel Marcus, *The Way of the Lord: Christological Exegesis of the Old Testament in the Gospel of Mark* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992), 151–52. However, Marcus has changed course away from his attempt to "play an exorcistic, Solomonic interpretation of 'Son of David' off against a messianic, Davidic one." See Marcus, *Mark 8–16*, 1120. As Marcus puts it so well, "David himself is an exorcist in the Bible (1 Sam 16:23) and Solomon is a royal figure" (1120).

34 See further Morton Ann Gernsbacher and Mark Faust, "Skilled Suppression," in *Interference and Inhibition in Cognition*, ed. F. N. Dempster and C. N. Brainerd (San Diego: Academic Press, 1995), 295–327; Morton Gernsbacher and Michael P. Kaschak, "Text Comprehension," in *The Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Psychology*, ed. Daniel Reisberg (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 467–73.

35 Mark 1:11; 1:24; 3:11; 8:29; 9:7; cf. 14:61; 15:2; 15:39.

of Solomonic activity (a ring, incantations, direct encounter with a demon, etc.) suggests that the Markan Jesus is more powerful than Solomon.

Thus, while the juxtaposition of Ἰησοῦς ὁ Ναζαρενὸς with υἱὲ Δαυίδ may have been strange to some in the audience, especially those familiar with scripts that associate the Son of David with Bethlehem,<sup>36</sup> it is not enough to derail an association between a messianic healer and the title. For those in the audience who have tracked with Mark's narrative portrait of Jesus thus far, the testimony of Bartimaeus makes explicit that which has only been described to this point by allusive language hinting at a comparison between Mark's Jesus and David. For this reason, Bartimaeus's cries in 10:47–48 form a testimony that sets off a narrative focus clarifying the Markan Jesus's characterization as "son of David" that extends through 12:37.

Until this point, the Davidic association has been entirely couched in the rhetoric of inference, whether through the use of titles associated with David (e.g., 1:1; 8:29; "Christ," "Son of God"), an implied comparison with David (2:23–28), and perhaps initially activated by allusive language to describe Jesus's therapeutic activity, which, as argued above, would likely have been understood instead via divine schemas and scripts (cf. 1:21–28; 2:1–12; 3:7–12; 5:1–20). The explicit Davidic attribution at this stage reinforces the implicit Davidic shadow cast by the *kyriotic* behavior.

Of course, probably some in the audience will not take Bartimaeus at his word—even as some modern scholars have not—but these will be few at this point, and even fewer still by the time the Gospel draws to an end. Moreover, even among those who trust the testimony of Bartimaeus may recognize that, like Peter's testimony, this title hardly covers the entirety of the characterization of Mark's Jesus. As we have seen, the *synkristic* relationship between the Markan Jesus and Yahweh has been sustained over the entire narrative with growing intensity, and this prominent aspect of Jesus's characterization will influence the way audience members integrate the new information from testimony of blind Bartimaeus.<sup>37</sup>

#### Blindness as a Symbol in Mark 10:46–52

As mentioned above, the language of "sitting" and "following," of blindness and sight, are symbolic in Mark's Gospel, and we recall that Demetrius in particular emphasized the value of symbols (συμβόλος) for stirring the audience to inference.<sup>38</sup> However, the question must be asked, "What is

36 This is, of course, a connection Matthew (2:1–23) and Luke (2:1–24) were sure to make.

37 See Gernsbacher and Kaschak, "Text Comprehension," 464–65.

38 Demetrius, *Eloc.* 243.

blindness symbolic of?" It may be related to the lack of perceptiveness on the part of the disciples,<sup>39</sup> whose dullness is metaphorically demonstrated by the two healing episodes in 8:22–26 and 10:46–52.<sup>40</sup> If audience members take cues from 8:22–26, they will understand Peter's incomplete testimony as offering a partial truth in keeping with his partial blindness (cf. 8:22–26). The same will be true of Bartimaeus, whose testimony says much that is true of Mark's Jesus, but leaves a great deal unexpressed. Bartimaeus's blindness need not symbolize *compete* spiritual blindness anymore than Peter was *completely* wrong or anymore than the demons were wrong in their testimonies (cf. 1:21–28; 3:7–12; 5:1–20).

Indeed, blindness was not uniformly taken as symbol of a complete lack of spiritual insight. Blindness was even sometimes associated with enhanced, compensatory spiritual insight and prophetic powers in both Jewish<sup>41</sup> and Greek<sup>42</sup> cultural memory.<sup>43</sup> If listeners hear Bartimaeus's cry from this vantage point, they may believe that he possesses special prophetic powers, which allow him to reveal Davidic dimensions of the characterization of Mark's Jesus using *prosopopoetic* language.<sup>44</sup> If this were the case, (literally) blind Bartimaeus, who possesses spiritual insight, would stand ironically over the (figuratively) blind disciples, who evince remarkable dullness.<sup>45</sup> Otherwise, he would stand with them (e.g., Peter) by virtue of his testimony, which reveals something of Mark's characterization of Jesus, but not the whole story.

### Some Concluding Remarks

To sum up, audience members would likely experience Bartimaeus's initial acclamation of the Markan Jesus as testimony fitting for the *synkristic*

39 Cf. Mark 7:32–37; 8:22–26; 9:14–27.

40 Mark 4:10–12. Mary Ann Beavis, *Mark*, Paideia (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 158.

41 LXX Gen 27 (esp. vv. 28–29; 39–40); 1 Sam 1:17, 27; 3:1, 9; 1 Kgs 14:1–16. See further Mary Ann Beavis, "From the Margin to the Way: A Feminist Reading of the Story of Bartimaeus," *JFSR* 14 (1998): 36–37.

42 Homer, *Od.* 10.487–574; 11:90–151; Soph., *OT* 299–513; Paus. 10.28–31; Apollod., *Epit.* 7.17, 34. See further Beavis, "From the Margin to the Way," 27.

43 Beavis, *Mark*, 159; Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 510; John R. Donahue and Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark*, SP 2 (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2002), 318–19; Beavis, "From the Margin to the Way," 27, 37.

44 In this way the testimonies of Bartimaeus and Peter's in 8:29 are comparable. Similarly, Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 510; Robbins, "Bartimaeus," 227.

45 For more on the blind prophet or seer, see Chad Hartsock, *Sight and Blindness in Luke-Acts: The Use of Physical Features in Characterization*, BIS 94 (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 76–81.



relationship between David and the Markan Jesus explicated to this point in the narrative. This testimony may either be heard in light of the *inclusio* of blindness formed between 8:22–26 and 10:46–52 or in light of the schemas and scripts associated with blind seers. In either case, Bartimaeus's testimony would be taken as fitting for Mark's Jesus in what it addresses (i.e. the Davidic aspects of *kyriotic* sonship), but inadequate by itself. Finally, it is not insignificant that the Markan Jesus makes his way to Jerusalem as the "Son of David." As we shall see below, the connection between Mark's Jesus and Mark's rendering of (ironic) Davidic kingship is crucial to the full portrait of *kyriotic* sonship in his passion; as he draws nearer to Jerusalem the Davidic contours of the characterization of Mark's Jesus are moving to the fore.

Mark 10:46–52 is important in our articulation of Mark's characterization of Jesus since it is the first and only scene in the narrative to explicitly acknowledge the ongoing *synkristic* relationship between Mark's Jesus and David with the title, "Son of David." This Davidic scene adds depth to the *kyriotic* inferences encouraged in earlier healing episodes and fills out the therapeutic dimensions of *kyriotic* sonship.<sup>46</sup>

With this initial thoroughly Davidic episode under their belts, all audience members will now be in a better position to construct a portrait of Mark's Jesus without neglecting David. While therapeutic elements were showcased in 10:46–52, in the next episode the more royal connotations will be emphasized in a way that cleverly eschews the revolutionary connotations sometimes associated with Davidic sonship (11:1–11). It will also join the therapeutic and royal aspects of the *synkristic* relationship with David through this narrational juxtaposition. It is to this scene that we now turn.

### *The One Who Comes in the Name of the Lord (Mark 11:1–11)*

As Mark's Jesus approaches Jerusalem for his appointed suffering,<sup>47</sup> he enters Jerusalem in a scene that utilizes a rhetorical complex of *emphasis*, allusive language, and irony to activate the *synkristic* assimilations both to David and Yahweh in succession, while narrowly avoiding the revolutionary connotations latent in the cries of the crowds (cf. 11:8–10). This clever co-opting of

46 While he does not address the allusive language or use of *emphasis*, Robbins's ("Bartimaeus," 227) conclusion is similar and apropos: "In the Bartimaeus story the entire force of Jesus's healing-discipleship activity is declared to be Son of David activity" (227). Decker is incorrect that Bartimaeus's cries heighten "royal and nationalistic ideology;" therapeutic scripts are far more likely to be activated. See Rodney J. Decker, *Mark 9–16: A Handbook on the Greek Text* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2014), 74.

47 See above on 10:46–52.

the beneficial Davidic traditions, combined with such a shrewd avoidance of those with more negative connotations, would be particularly welcome amidst the tumultuous period surrounding the destruction of Jerusalem and its aftermath.<sup>48</sup>

As the group approaches Jerusalem, the Markan Jesus offers specific instructions to two unnamed disciples. The level of detail in these instructions will suggest for many in the audience that the Markan Jesus possesses prophetic qualities,<sup>49</sup> which should not be surprising at this point in the story since he demonstrated godlike knowledge of a young man's obedience to the Law only a few minutes earlier in the performance.<sup>50</sup> Using *ekphrastic* language designed to bring the audience into the story itself, Jesus instructs the two disciples to retrieve a "colt upon which no person has ever sat" (πῶλον δεδεμένον ἐφ' ὃν οὐδεὶς οὐπω ἀνθρώπων ἐκάθισεν).<sup>51</sup> When they are asked what they are doing, they should respond, "'The Lord has need of it' (ὁ κύριος αὐτοῦ χρεῖαν ἔχει)<sup>52</sup> and will send it back here immediately" (11:3). As the story unfolds, everything happens just as he has said it would (11:4–7). Jesus then mounts the colt, now covered with cloaks, and rides toward Jerusalem.

#### Hints of Assimilation to David

This narrative portrait has several elements that prompt audience reflection upon the characterization of Mark's Jesus as the *kyriotic* Son. As we have already mentioned, the detailed *ekphrastic* language creates an environment particularly fertile for audience participation.<sup>53</sup> Beyond *ekphrastic* language, the scene is rife with allusive terminology that activates a number of passages from the LXX associated with David and the ideal Davidic king, especially Zech 9:9, Gen 49:10–11, and 1 Kgs 1:33–40. While none of these passages are directly evoked, those in the audience familiar with Jewish scripts may be expected to recognize the overlap with the depiction of a ruler of Israel riding upon a colt/mule and the Markan Jesus, who mounts the colt as the Davidic king (cf. Zech 9:9; Gen 49:10–11 LXX). Those in the audience for whom this theme

48 See further "To What Ends the Rhetoric of Inference?" in Chapter Seven below.

49 Similarly, Beavis, *Mark*, 167.

50 Mark 10:20–22; cf. 2:6–7.

51 See, e.g., Theon, *Prog.* 118–120; Ps-Hermogenes, *Prog.* 22–23; Rhet. Her. 2.30.49; 4.39.51; 4.54.68; Quintilian, *Inst.* 4.2.63–64; 6.2.32; 8.3.61; 9.2.40.

52 On the ambiguity of this clause and how that ambiguity is leveraged through *emphasis*, see below.

53 Cf. Ruth Webb, *Ekphrasis, Imagination and Persuasion in Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Practice* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009), 131–66.

is triggered will be even more likely to understand the Markan Jesus in royal terms if scripts associated with 2 Kgs 9:13 LXX are primed, in which people “took their garments and placed them beneath him on the *garem* of the steps, and trumpeted with a horn, and said, ‘Jehu is king!’” (see below).<sup>54</sup>

Less recognized, though perhaps most striking, is the image in 1 Kgs 1:33–40 LXX where Solomon rides in on “the mule of king David” (1:38) and is anointed as king, with a greater throne than “my lord king David,”<sup>55</sup> (1:37) as the horn trumpets and the people cheer, “Let King Solomon live!” (1:39).<sup>56</sup> Thus the colt/mule<sup>57</sup> functions as a powerful symbol of the coronation of the Davidic king in the LXX and beyond. Recalling Demetrius’s commendation of the use of symbols to lead the audience to infer more than is explicitly stated (*Eloc.* 243), we note the power of the “colt” symbol in 11:2–7 to depict the Markan Jesus as a Davidic king, similar to David’s son Solomon (cf. 1 Kgs 1:38 LXX).

This familiar depiction of a royal colt may be contrasted profitably with the rather unusual description of the Markan colt as one “upon which no person has ever sat” (ἐφ’ ὃν οὐδεὶς οὐπω ἀνθρώπων ἐκάθισεν) (Mark 11:2). The narrative never returns to the phrase, but those in the audience who have followed the development of the portrait of Mark’s Jesus may infer that the never-ridden-before colt symbolizes the distinctive sort of Davidic kingship enjoyed by Mark’s Jesus.

As we have seen earlier in the narrative, audience members will have concluded that the conception of Davidic messianism presented by Mark is distinctive in at least two important ways. First, it is linked to the passion and resurrection of the Markan Jesus.<sup>58</sup> And second, it is enhanced by Jesus’s

54 Kirsten Marie Hartvigsen, *Prepare the Way of the Lord: Towards a Cognitive Poetic Analysis of Audience Involvement with Characters and Events in the Markan World*, BZNW 180 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012), 387. Cf. Lars Hartman, *Mark for the Nations: A Text- and Reader-Oriented Commentary* (Eugene, Ore.: Pickwick, 2010), 468; Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 519; Donahue and Harrington, *Mark*, 322; Morna D. Hooker, *The Gospel According to Saint Mark*, BNTC 2 (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1991), 259.

55 καθὼς ἦν κύριος μετὰ τοῦ κυρίου μου τοῦ βασιλέως, οὕτως εἶη μετὰ Σαλωμων καὶ μεγαλύναι τὸν θρόνον αὐτοῦ ὑπὲρ τὸν θρόνον τοῦ κυρίου μου τοῦ βασιλέως Δαυιδ (1 Kgs 1:37 LXX).

56 But see Hartvigsen, *Prepare*, 388; Hartman, *Mark*, 469; Heil, *Mark*, 223. Cf. Frank J. Matera, *The Kingship of Jesus: Composition and Theology in Mark 15*, SBLDS 66 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1982), 70.

57 Because they are content addressable, the terms for colt (πῶλος/ἡμίονος) need not be identical in LXX across Gen 49:11; Zech 9:9; and 1 Kgs 1:38 in order to activate cultural memory grounded therein. Hartvigsen, *Prepare*, 388 n. 1494.

58 Cf. Mark 8:27–9:13; 10:45–52.

*synkristic* assimilation to Yahweh.<sup>59</sup> Perceptive hearers may be expected at this point to have—at a bare minimum—begun to infer both of these elements at this point in the story, even if to varying degrees. Yet for many, the performance will move too quickly to allow for much reflection upon scripts derived from the LXX. As we shall see below, the anticlimactic end of the episode points the audience past the glorious acclamations of the crowd in 11:8–10 toward the passion and resurrection that awaits Mark's royal Davidic king. However, first we must address the support given to Jesus's *synkristic* assimilation to Yahweh, which complements the colt Davidic symbolism.

#### Hints at Assimilation to Yahweh

Most treatments note the oddness of the clause, ὁ κύριος αὐτοῦ χρεῖαν ἔχει, and the referent of ὁ κύριος has been variously understood. Years ago, Vincent Taylor argued that the term referred to the owner of the colt, but that hardly fits the context of this story, where the group entering Jerusalem has the need, not the anonymous owner of the colt.<sup>60</sup> Others have understood the referent to be the Markan Jesus.<sup>61</sup> For example, most recently, Hartman has suggested that Jesus claims authority over the colt.<sup>62</sup>

Rather than simply claiming authority over the colt, some audience members might understand the Markan Jesus referring to himself as ὁ κύριος. If this episode (11:1–11) is primed or activated later at 14:12–16, where Mark's Jesus similarly sends disciples into town, audience members may draw a connection, particularly in light of Jesus's unmistakable reference to himself in third person (14:14): "tell the owner of the house, 'The Teacher says, "Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?"'"<sup>63</sup> Might the same be the case here?

There were hints in this direction in 2:28 where Jesus referred to himself as the "Son of Humanity," who was κύριος, even over the Sabbath. Likewise,

59 Cf. Mark 1:21–28; 2:1–12; 2:21–28; 3:7–12; 5:1–20; 8:27–9:13.

60 Further, the narrative gives no indication, despite Taylor's arguments, that the owner of the colt was with the Markan Jesus. See Vincent Taylor, *Gospel According to St. Mark: An Introduction and Commentary* (London: MacMillan, 1952), 454–55. Cf. C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Gospel according to Saint Mark: An Introduction and Commentary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 350.

61 Hartman, *Mark*, 465; Malbon, *Mark's Jesus*, 148–49; Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 518; Robert H. Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 624; Heil, *Mark*, 222; Hooker, *Mark*, 258; Pesch, *Markusevangelium*, 2:180.

62 Hartman, *Mark*, 465. Similarly, Decker, *Mark* 9–16, 81.

63 εἶπατε τῷ οἰκοδεσπότῃ ὅτι ὁ διδάσκαλος λέγει· ποῦ ἐστὶν τὸ κατάλυμά μου ὅπου τὸ πάσχα μετὰ τῶν μαθητῶν μου φάγω;

we saw that some audience members would have understood the Markan Jesus as referring to himself as ὁ κύριος in 5:19. Audience members for whom 2:28 and/or 5:19 is primed or activated may come to the same conclusion here: The Markan Jesus refers to himself as ὁ κύριος.<sup>64</sup> If so, the *kyriotic* dimensions of Jesus's characterization would be explicitly activated at this point, which is important considering that the Davidic scripts associated with kingship are activated in this same context, thus filling out *kyriotic* sonship symmetrically.

Other audience members may be hesitant to understand the Markan Jesus referring to himself as ὁ κύριος, especially if they have attributed to Jesus the habit of eschewing self-aggrandizement (cf. 10:17–22). These audience members may conclude that God is the referent of ὁ κύριος, under whose authority the Markan Jesus is acting.<sup>65</sup> As Evans has suggested, the animal may be understood as a sort of temporary corban.<sup>66</sup> If these audience members have activated 5:19 (and understand God as the referent of ὁ κύριος there), then they will likely come to the same conclusion here. However, these audience members witnessed the narrator using the words of the Markan Jesus to encourage activation of the *synkristic* assimilation to Yahweh (cf. 5:20). What the Markan Jesus used to refer to “God,” the narrator coopted to refer to Jesus.<sup>67</sup> Is the same thing happening here?

This potential for deliberate ambiguity with the referent of ὁ κύριος has not gone unnoticed.<sup>68</sup> Moloney has objected that there is “no need to read complicated speculations or an exalted Christology into this use of ὁ κύριος.”<sup>69</sup> However, these sentiments cut against the grain of ancient rhetorical theory. Moreover, given the propensity with which we have seen Mark's story leverage ambiguity around the use of ὁ κύριος thus far, we should not be surprised

64 Cf. Mark 1:3; 2:28; 5:19; 7:28; 5:19.

65 R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 432; Evans, *Mark 8:27–16:20*, 143.

66 Evans, *Mark 8:27–16:20*, 143.

67 Cf. Mark 10:17–22.

68 Hartvigsen, *Prepare*, 385; Daniel Johansson, “Kyrios in the Gospel of Mark,” *JSNT* 33 (2010): 107; Marcus, *Mark 8–16*, 773; M. Eugene Boring, “Markan Christology: God-Language for Jesus?,” *NTS* 45 (1999): 452; Edwin K. Broadhead, *Naming Jesus: Titular Christology in the Gospel of Mark*, JSNTSup 175 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999), 139–40; Bas M. F. van Iersel, *Mark: A Reader-Response Commentary*, LNTS 164 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 353.

69 Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2002), 217. See Chapter Two above for further discussion of the various ways, including *emphasis*, that ambiguity was used to prompt audience inference.

if some audience members find a similar function here.<sup>70</sup> Some may find the ambiguity focused on whether Jesus means to convey divine status or simple authority over the colt.

Alternatively, at the story level, some may understand the Markan Jesus to be saying something similar to 5:19, where he told the former demon-possessed man to tell what the “Lord” (God) had done for him (despite different intentions from the narrator in 5:20). However, these audience members have already been led to assimilate Mark’s Jesus to God via allusive language. They are thus prepared to do likewise at this point in the narrative. Just as these audience members understood the narrator to be portraying the Markan Jesus with all humility while simultaneously hinting at divine aspects of his characterization in 5:19–20, so too will they likely understand the narrator’s tactics in 11:3–7 when the disciples bring the colt not to God, but to Jesus. This subtle *emphasis* in 11:3 activates the *synkristic* assimilation of the Markan Jesus to Yahweh that was begun in 1:3 and will extend through the passion.<sup>71</sup>

#### Clarifying the Nature of Davidic Messianism via *Kyriotic* Sonship

Regardless of which of these directions audience members take, the crowds receive the Markan Jesus in 11:8–10 only after the narrative portrait of Mark’s Jesus as the *kyriotic* Son has been reinforced through symbolism, *emphasis*, and allusive language for both David and Yahweh. A gap is thus created in the performance, even if only initially, when the crowds hail the coming kingdom of their ancestor David in a manner infused with revolutionary potential. The image of the crowds lining the roads, covering it with their cloaks (ἱμάτια) and leafy branches, may activate scripts associated with 2 Kgs 9:13 LXX for members of the audience particularly familiar with Jewish cultural memory (see above).<sup>72</sup> In 2 Kgs 9:13, the commanders of Jehu’s armies lay their cloaks (ἱμάτια) on the bare steps. Alternatively, those unfamiliar with 2 Kgs 9 or related scripts would still interpret the act in keeping with the narrative thus far, which would lead to the inference that the crowds are respectfully treating the Markan Jesus as a king.<sup>73</sup>

Next, the cries of the crowd find their voice in Ps 117:25–26 LXX, which hails the “one who comes in the name of the Lord” (fitting for Mark’s Jesus [see above on 11:3]) as the one who ushers in “the coming kingdom of our ancestor

70 E.g. Mark 1:3; 2:28; 5:19.

71 Though he arrives by different means, see, similarly, Matera, *Kingship*, 74.

72 Hartvigsen, *Prepare*, 397; Hartman, *Mark*, 468; Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 519; Donahue and Harrington, *Mark*, 322; Hooker, *Mark*, 2593.

73 Hartvigsen, *Prepare*, 387.

David" (questionable for Mark's Jesus). On the one hand, the crowds are cast using *prosopopoeia*, and the speech is fitting for those in and around Jerusalem. On the other hand, as several interpreters have noted, in the *Markan* world Jesus brings with him the kingdom of *God*, not the kingdom of David.<sup>74</sup> At a minimum, the notion of the "kingdom of David" is awkward, given the narrative thus far. Further, this kingdom (of God) will not be established through pursuits of glory and triumph (cf. 10:35–45), but through the passion and resurrection (10:33–34).

If these Davidic streams of Jewish schemas and scripts are activated, the revolutionary attempts to subvert the Roman government, which eventually led to the Jewish revolt, might be activated subsequently, as well.<sup>75</sup> If members in the audience entertained this revolutionary connection or identified with the cheering crowds, they would soon be challenged in that association by the conclusion of the episode. Rather than mounting a charge on Jerusalem, the Markan Jesus enters the temple, looks around a bit, grows tired ("it was already late"), and then returns to Bethany with the twelve (11:11).

It is not difficult to imagine a social situation in the wake of the destruction of Jerusalem in which Christian communities would be hesitant to associate Jesus with any violent resistance, lest they suffer a similar fate. If this were the case, this particularly clever narratival configuration would have provided an effective way to salvage Davidic hopes from any revolutionary connotations that may have built steam in the latter half of the first century of the Common Era. The *kyriot*ic Son is a Davidic king, but not one that will support violent uprisings against Rome.<sup>76</sup>

### Concluding Remarks

The entry into Jerusalem (11:1–11) drips with irony.<sup>77</sup> It focuses the audience's attention on the Markan Jesus's *synkristic* assimilation to David and Yahweh through *emphasis* via the colt symbolism (11:2–7)—for those who grasp it during the performance—and the accompanying ambiguity on ὁ κύριος (11:3, 7).

74 Cf. Mark 1:15; 4:11, 26, 30; 9:1, 47; 10:14–15, 23–25; 12:34; 14:25; 15:43; So also, e.g., Hartvigsen, *Prepare*, 388; Moloney, *Mark*, 219–20; Werner H. Kelber, *Mark's Story of Jesus* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1979), 65.

75 The Markan Jesus bears some resemblance to Menachem son of Judas the Galilean, who symbolically entered Jerusalem as a Davidic king with armed followers and later entered the temple dressed in royal robes (Josephus, *B.J.* 2.17.8 §§433–434; 2.17.9 §444). Marcus, *Mark* 8–16, 780. Cf. Martin Hengel, *The Zealots: Investigations into the Jewish Freedom Movement in the Period from Herod I until 70 A. D.* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1989), 299–300.

76 See further "To What Ends the Rhetoric of Inference?" in Chapter Seven below.

77 Similarly, Heil, *Mark*, 223; Matera, *Kingship*, 70–74, esp. 74; Kelber, *Mark's Story*, 58.



While there is the potential for a revolutionary connection (11:8–11), the narrative squelches it before it has the opportunity to take hold in the characterization of Mark's Jesus. By silencing the potential for a revolutionary understanding of the Markan Jesus's Davidic sonship, the narrative corrects audience interpretations of Davidic sonship not in accordance with *kyriotic* sonship to this point in the narrative.

The narrative placement of this episode complements the therapeutic contours of 10:46–52 and affirms the royal contours of Jesus's characterization that have received attention since the prologue. It likewise stresses the ironic path of the *kyriotic* Son, whose glory is found in his passion and resurrection, not in traditionally conceived victorious terms. As far as the narrative is concerned, he enters Jerusalem in order to die and rise again. Any listeners not convinced of this datum thus far will have no choice when they hear the passion: he will not be installed as king until he is nailed to the throne of his cross and comes back to life.<sup>78</sup>

This portrait of *kyriotic* sonship has created some tension throughout the narrative. How can one person be assimilated to both Yahweh and David, to Yahweh's king and Israel's deity? This is the question the narrative now picks up in earnest.

### *David's Lord and David's Son (Mark 12:35–37)*

The so-called "son of David" question has vexed interpreters because of its apparent rejection of Davidic sonship. How can Mark's Jesus rightly be thought of as David's "son," given his position as David's "Lord"?<sup>79</sup>

#### Introductory Remarks

Two major interpretive options are represented in previous scholarship. Some scholars argue that Davidic messianism (or at least some aspects of it) are actually upheld by 12:35–37. For example, Marcus argues that Mark 12:35–37 presents the Markan Jesus as "not (just) the Son of David, but (also) as the Son of God."<sup>80</sup> On this line of thinking, the text simply cannot be taken at face

78 Kelber, *Mark's Story*, 58.

79 For a helpful, though brief, survey, see Frank J. Matera, *New Testament Christology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1999), 19–21.

80 Marcus, *Mark 8–16*, 850–51. This view has a variety of different permutations; see, e.g., Beavis, *Mark*, 182; Stephen P. Ahearne-Kroll, *The Psalms of Lament in Mark's Passion: Jesus' Davidic Suffering*, SNTSMS 142 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 161–66; Broadhead, *Naming Jesus*, 109–15; Beavis, "From the Margin to the Way," 32; Kingsbury,

value—that is, as rejecting Davidic sonship for the Markan Jesus—and so another solution is sought.

Others, however, maintain that the episode represents a wholesale rejection of Davidic sonship.<sup>81</sup> For example, Moloney argues that the Markan Jesus “transcends the Jewish messianic hopes [for a Davidic messiah] taught by the scribes and in doing so shows that they are failing in the proper exercise of their function within Israel, the interpretation of Scripture.”<sup>82</sup> In her extended discussion of the passage, Malbon rejects Davidic sonship on the basis of the “surface meaning, that is, the meaning most obviously understood from the logic of the Markan Jesus’s words.”<sup>83</sup> Later she questions whether this may be another instance of the Markan Jesus’s “deflection of attention away from human things and more directly to divine things, away from a human, Davidic king to the kingdom of God.”<sup>84</sup>

However, Malbon’s analysis (here and elsewhere) ignores the value of subtle insinuation, which is a staple of ancient rhetorical theory, as well as Mark’s narrative portrait of Jesus. Audience members were not expected to stop at the surface level; indeed, they were meant to move beyond it to “deeper” meaning

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*Christology*, 108–14; Ferdinand Hahn, *Titles of Jesus in Christology: Their History in Early Christianity*, trans. H. Knight and G. Ogg (London: Lutterworth, 1969), 252.

- 81 E.g., Black, *Mark*, 260–61; Malbon, *Mark’s Jesus*, 159–69; Boring, “Markan Christology,” 256; 347–49; Moloney, *Mark*, 244–45; Marcus, *Way*, 137–52; Pesch, *Markusevangelium*, 2:255–56; William Telford, *The Barren Temple and the Withered Tree: A Redaction-Critical Analysis of the Cursing of the Fig-Tree Pericope in Mark’s Gospel and Its Relation to the Cleansing of the Temple Tradition*, JSNTSup 1 (Sheffield: JSOT, 1980), 251–69; Achtemeier, “And He Followed Him’: Miracles and Discipleship in Mark 10:46–52,” 126–30; Kelber, *Kingdom*, 95–106; Alfred Suhl, *Die Funktion der alttestamentlichen Zitate und Anspielungen im Markusevangelium* (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1965), 91–94; Joseph Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth*, trans. Herbert Danby (London: George Allen, 1925), 320; William Wrede, *Vorträge und Studien* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1907), 168, 175. However, as mentioned above, Marcus has since changed his mind on the role of Davidic messianism in Mark’s portrait of Jesus. Similarly, early in my research for this project, I was convinced that the Gospel of Mark rejected Davidic contours in place of those more associated with Yahweh, and I presented those findings to the Mark Group in a paper, Michael R. Whittington, “The Rhetoric of *Kyrios* and the Diminution of the Son of David in the Gospel of Mark” (presented at the Society of Biblical Literature, Annual Meeting, San Francisco, Cal., 2011). In the end, it was attention to the rhetorical contours of Mark’s Gospel as a whole, particularly regarding those figures used to draw audience inference (and the stubborn questioning of not a few of my colleagues!), which ultimately led to the thesis presented herein.

82 Moloney, *Mark*, 244.

83 Malbon, *Mark’s Jesus*, 164.

84 Malbon, *Mark’s Jesus*, 165.

prompted by fertile soil at the surface. One of the chief ways to encourage this sort of inference was through rhetorical questions, like the one in 12:37 (see below). Further, even if we, for the sake of argument, accept that the Markan Jesus deflects honor in 12:35–37, it would not preclude the narrator from insinuating something about Jesus other than what the character directly communicates—a possibility which Malbon herself acknowledges in her discussion of 5:19–20, and which we have seen in our discussions of 10:17–23 and, perhaps, 11:1–7 above.<sup>85</sup> Finally, to Moloney's comments, while the narrative clearly calls into question scribal interpretation (see below), it is a mistake to lump all "Jewish messianic hopes" into a singular conception of Davidic messiahship. As we have seen above, particularly in 10:46–52 and 11:1–11, the narrative has been careful to distinguish different connotations issuing forth from David, linking Mark's Jesus to some and distancing him from others.

While we will return to the details of those connotations below, at this point it is most important to emphasize that *Mark's Jesus has been the beneficiary of a synkristic relationship with David since the incipit*.<sup>86</sup> While some of the Davidic scripts were suppressed earlier in the performance, the testimonies of the narrator, Peter, and Bartimaeus have made the Davidic connection explicit (on which, see above). Moreover, the royal contours of the Davidic *synkristic* relationship were affirmed in 11:1–11 as the Markan Jesus was cast a son of David through allusive language that encouraged audience reflection on Solomon's coronation in 11:2–7 (cf. 1 Kgs 1:33–40 LXX).

However, this royal portrait also deliberately avoids any political interpretations of the entrance into Jerusalem, despite his ushering in the "kingdom of our ancestor David" (11:9–10). Instead, that same narrative also activated Jesus's *synkristic* assimilation to Yahweh through *emphasis* on ὁ κύριος in 11:3 and directed the audience to anticipate the passion and resurrection with its anticlimactic and antipolitical conclusion in 11:11. This rehearsal of the findings above reminds us that, however we construe 12:35–37, dislodging the portrait of Mark's Jesus as the *kyriotic* son of David would not be an easy task, nor one that audience members would expect at this point in the narrative. If the narrative as a whole, especially the immediate context, strongly suggests that

85 Malbon, *Mark's Jesus*, 72. This is the case despite the fact that, in 5:20, the "bending" of the Markan Jesus's words comes in the form of commentary from the narrator, whereas here it would come by virtue of the flow of the narrative and its dependency on audience inference given the narrative portrait in 10:45–52, 11:1–11, and elsewhere. See further above on 5:1–20.

86 E.g., Mark 1:1; 1:11, 1:12–13; 1:24–27; 2:1–12; 2:21–28; 5:1–20; 8:27–31; 10:45–52.

12:35–37 is not best understood as wholesale rejection of Davidic sonship, how then might we expect the Markan audience to experience the episode?

It is, of course, possible that some in the audience may abandon a strongly Davidic portrait for Mark's Jesus because of 12:35–37. However, doing so would move against the grain of the story as a whole, both what precedes and what follows, not to mention the rhetoric of the passage itself. Moreover, as Lidija Novakovic has pointed out, both υἱὸς Δαυίδ and κύριος are titles that can be, and have been, legitimately associated with the Messiah (cf. Pss. Sol. 17:21 [υἱὸν Δαυίδ], 32 [χριστὸς κύριος];<sup>87</sup> Acts 2:29–36<sup>88</sup>).<sup>89</sup> Thus it is surprising that the Davidic lineage of the Messiah is seemingly called into question.<sup>90</sup>

Instead, many audience members would likely understand 12:35–37 as distancing Jesus's *synkristic* assimilation to David from the scribal political conceptions of Davidic sonship.<sup>91</sup> This is accomplished while simultaneously maintaining the royal contours already upheld by the narrative, including the ironic necessity of the passion and resurrection (cf. 10:32–45, 46–52; 11:1–11).

Mark 12:35–37 is the first episode in the narrative to bring an explicit intersection between the *synkristic* relationships with David and Yahweh in a way that raises the question of how those relationships interact. It also marks the first explicit affirmation of Mark's Jesus as κύριος, "David's Lord," a datum that draws the ever-building series of allusive language and instances of *emphasis* earlier in the narrative to a crescendo. By bringing the matter out so plainly only at this late stage, audience members are meant to have been slowly won over by the steady rhetoric of inference. Now in 12:35–37, hearers find

87 Greek text from Robert B. Wright, ed., *Psalms of Solomon: A Critical Edition of the Greek Text* (New York: T&T Clark, 2007).

88 Importantly, Acts 2:29–36 both κύριος and χριστός are attributed to Jesus, along with explicitly Davidic testimony from Ps 109:1 LXX, just as we have in Mark 12:35–37.

89 Lidija Novakovic, *Messiah, the Healer of the Sick: A Study of Jesus As the Son of David in the Gospel of Matthew*, WUNT 2/170 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 57–58.

90 Some scholars have found in Jesus's questions the markings of rabbinic haggadah (cf. *b. Nid.* 69b–71a), with the result that Jesus is trying to show that two seemingly contradictory passages are in fact complementary. The first to argue for this connection was David Daube, "Four Types of Questions," *JTS* 2 (1951): 45–48, but others have followed him; see, e.g., Evald Lövestam, "Die Davidssohnfrage," 72–82 27 (1962): 72–82; William L. Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition, and Notes*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 435–36; Donald Juel, *Messianic Exegesis: Christological Interpretation of the Old Testament in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1988), 142–44; Novakovic, *Messiah*, 50–54; Anthony Le Donne, *The Historiographical Jesus: Memory, Typology, and the Son of David* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2009), 255.

91 See further below.

confirmation of the view of which they are now presumably convinced. All that remains is a demonstration of how the Davidic and divine aspects of this *kyriotic* sonship work together, a matter left unentertained until the passion. We begin our discussion in 12:35, where the scribes have run out of questions and the Markan Jesus poses a question of his own.

### The Question of the Scribal View of Davidic Sonship (12:35)

Teaching in the temple, the Markan Jesus asks, πῶς λέγουσιν οἱ γραμματεῖς ὅτι ὁ χριστὸς υἱὸς Δαυὶδ ἔστιν; This query easily transfers to audience members, whose prior reflection on the characterization of Mark's Jesus piques their interest in the question.<sup>92</sup> If hearers assume that the Markan Jesus implies that the scribes are entirely wrong, the question itself may well be shocking since they have been directed to think of the Markan Jesus as both the "Christ" and David's son since the prologue. On the other hand, since the audience has already developed suspicion of the views of the scribes (cf. 1:21) and the narrative itself has upheld Davidic sonship thus far, these audience members may believe that the Markan Jesus is rejecting the particular view of the scribes and confirming the narrative's (and the audience's) more nuanced understanding of the nature of Davidic sonship. *The value of the ambiguity of the question in 12:35 lies precisely in the fact that it is difficult to understand what exactly the Markan Jesus is getting at.* This lack of clarity in the story creates a gap that prompts listeners struggle for meaning.

For some in the audience, it may seem as though Davidic sonship is being rejected. To be sure, this would be a surprising development in light of the foregoing narrative and one that would even cut against the grain of what follows in 12:36–37. Others will immediately accept that the scribal view is wrong at face value and anticipate a corrective from the Markan Jesus on the true nature of Davidic sonship. Either way, this ambiguous question has the rhetorical effect of drawing audience participation so that they reflect on the question posed in the story.<sup>93</sup> But what exactly do the scribes mean by υἱὸς Δαυὶδ?

92 On audience identification and its effect on audience participation, see discussion in Keith Oatley, "A Taxonomy of the Emotions of Literary Response and a Theory of Identification in Fictional Narrative," *Poetics* 23 (1994): 53–74; Michael D. Slater, "Entertainment Education and the Persuasive Impact of Narratives," in *Narrative Impact: Social and Cognitive Foundations*, ed. Melanie C. Green, Jeffrey J. Strange, and Timothy C. Brock (Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2002), 157–81.

93 So also Robert M. Fowler, *Let the Reader Understand: Reader-Response Criticism and the Gospel of Mark* (Harrisburg: Trinity, 1996), 199. Cf. Demetrius, *Eloc.* 222; 279.

It is possible that general Davidic lineage is in view. In this sense, all Judeans are, to some degree, children of David (11:10). However, the Markan Jesus clearly fits this description of Davidic sonship on anyone's appraisal, and the question seems to presuppose that the Markan Jesus does *not* match what the scribes think of the Messiah. Might the scribes conceive of the Son of David as a therapeutic figure? It does not seem likely, since the narrative has just explicitly characterized Mark's Jesus as David's therapeutic son, even if this does not do full justice to the portrait of the narrative's protagonist (cf. 10:46–52). Alternatively, the scribes may think of the Messiah as a royal, non-political figure, but Mark's Jesus was also recently confirmed as such in 11:1–11.<sup>94</sup> Finally, the scribes may support the notion that the Messiah is a political king, who will rule from David's throne. This fits much better than the previous options since the audience has been encouraged on several occasions to shun the political associations, which typically accompany such a royal Davidic messiah.<sup>95</sup>

Given the expectation of audience suspicion of the scribes, we may expect listeners to be skeptical of a scribal view regardless of whether or not those audience members were familiar with hopes for a political "son of David" derived from Jewish cultural memory (cf. Ps. Sol. 17.21–25). Doubt for the "*scribal view*," as such, would naturally lead to its association with the unsavory political associations rejected in 8:27–33 and 11:1–11. Therefore, we may paraphrase the probable audience experience of the question in 12:35: "How can the scribes say that the Messiah is a political 'son of David' figure?" Since the foregoing narrative has already inoculated the audience against such a characterization, audience members are ready to condemn the view as erroneous even before the question is posed.

#### The Inspired Testimony of David (12:36)

The audience is confirmed in this rejection of the scribal view by the testimony placed on the lips of the Markan Jesus, who cites David as a witness in 12:36. However, since David is said to be speaking ἐν τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἁγίῳ, the testimony offered is not received simply as an ancient testimony from a famous person, which would naturally contain great power to convince, but rather as testimony in harmony with the divine perspective since David is cast as an inspired prophet at this point.<sup>96</sup> By citing inspired testimony from a famous ancient witness, the Markan Jesus essentially shuts down all objections while buoying the view espoused by the narrative and sympathetic members of the

94 See also, e.g., 1:1, 9–11; 8:27–33 in Chapters Three and Four, respectively.

95 See above on Mark 8:27–33 and 11:1–11 in Chapters Four and Five, respectively.

96 Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 579.

audience. Those in the audience familiar with the LXX might recognize the testimony as a conflation of royal enthronement psalms (Pss 109:1 and 8:7 LXX). In addition, the passion may be activated for those who have prior familiarity with the Markan narrative since 14:62 is the only other place in the narrative that Ps 109 LXX is uttered (as a testimony in that context, as well). But why does the Markan Jesus call forth testimony from the inspired David in 12:36?

It is not inconsequential that the witness called is none other than David. Who better to offer the first explicit testimony to the Davidic Lord but David himself? The testimony of this inspired prophet acknowledges the Messiah (Jesus in Mark's story world) as ὁ κύριος. This testimony evokes a scene for the audience in which Yahweh tells his Messiah, designated as κύριος μου, to join him on his own throne or, perhaps, a throne next to his, and wait until his enemies are subjugated to him.<sup>97</sup>

This imagery of two *kyrioi* reigning on a single throne will activate scripts of co-regency and imply once more an assimilation to God that fits—in more explicit fashion—the prior insinuations and inferences based on allusive

97 Though it is difficult to know how familiar first-century audiences would be with this imagery, the portrait was common in ancient Israel. By portraying the king at Yahweh's right hand, the psalmist places the king in the place of highest honor, authority, and safety; more concretely, it is often associated with divine sonship through adoption by the deity. As is often recognized, this image is a common one in Egypt as demonstrated through the iconography of the New Kingdom. The depictions are striking, featuring the king seated on the lap of a god or goddess, cradled in the deity's arms, with the king's feet supported by a box full of his enemies. In other instances, the king is seated on the throne itself next to the deity. For example, Amenophis III and Haremhab are both depicted as being seated to the right of a deity. In a similar fashion, while in Israel the king is often depicted as seated *before* Yahweh or his throne (Pss. 61:7; 89:36), here in Ps 110:1 (109:1 LXX) the king is seated next to him. For other references to the right hand (יְמִינִי/δεξιῶν μου) in the royal psalms, see Pss 18:35; 20:6; 21:8; 45:4, 9; 144:8, 11 MT. On this imagery as rooted in Egyptian myth, see Klaus Koch, "Der König als Sohn Gottes in Ägypten und Israel," in *"Mein Sohn bist du" (Ps 2,7): Studien zu den Königspsalmen*, Stuttgarter Bibelstudien 192 (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2002), 16. For facsimiles depicting the king on a throne next to the god, but not on the god's throne or lap itself, see Othmar Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms*, trans. Timothy J. Hallett (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1997), 254–55, 263–64; Scott R. A. Starbuck, *Court Oracles in the Psalms: The So-Called Royal Psalms in Their Ancient Near Eastern Context*, SBLDS 172 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1999), 143–44. For further discussion of Amenophis III and Haremhab, see Adela Yarbro Collins and John J. Collins, *King and Messiah as Son of God: Divine, Human, and Angelic Messianic Figures in Biblical and Related Literature* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 16; cf. Keel, *Symbolism*, 263.



language and *emphasis* that began in the prologue.<sup>98</sup> Strikingly, it does so in the context of a discussion of the Messiah (= Mark's Jesus) vis-à-vis David's Son, a juxtaposition that likewise assimilates the Gospel's Davidic messianism to God via the title ὁ κύριος and co-regency imagery. Thus, perceptive members of the audience ought to pick up on the fact that, as with the allusive language in the foregoing narrative, the Davidic and divine aspects of *kyriotic* sonship are inextricably connected.

Those familiar with other early Christian applications of this stream of tradition grounded in the LXX may recognize that this testimony reflects similar usages of Ps 109 LXX to depict the glorified state of Jesus after his resurrection or exaltation.<sup>99</sup> Moreover, the foregoing narrative has made subtle hints at the connection between exaltation and crucifixion. For example, in Mark 10:37–40 the symbols of baptism, enthronement, and drinking vessel intersect and point forward to the Markan Jesus's crucifixion.<sup>100</sup> The line καθου ἐκ δεξιῶν μου (12:36) will likely activate for perceptive audience members Jesus's earlier teaching that he is not able to decide who will sit at his right or left (καθισαι ἐκ δεξιῶν μου ἢ ἐξ εὐωνύμων οὐκ ἔστιν ἐμὸν δοῦναι). This connection imports the theme of crucifixion as enthronement into 12:35–37. If 10:37–40 is cued for audience members, the testimony in 12:36 challenges the scribal view that the Messiah is a *political* “son of David” figure by citing inspired testimony that highlights Mark's *synkristic* relationship with Yahweh in the context of *royal* psalmic imagery of enthronement. Further, it does so in a way that undercuts political resistance with the path of suffering.

Thus, the rhetorical payoff of David's testimony in 12:36 would be very similar to that of 11:1–11 in which *political* Davidic sonship is avoided while the more foundational *royal* sonship is preserved,<sup>101</sup> even if it is enveloped by the

98 So also Marcus, *Mark* 8–16, 650.

99 See Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 580–82; Martin C. Albl, *And Scripture Cannot Be Broken: The Form and Function of the Early Christian Testimonia Collections*, NovTSup 96 (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 232, 236 n. 11. A *testimonium* of this sort seems to be used in *Barn.* 12:10–11, though the author of Barnabas interprets Ps 109:1 LXX differently than Mark 12:35–37.

100 John and James want to sit enthroned at the right and left of the Markan Jesus. However, while they will undergo a “baptism” like his, drinking from the same vessel, as it were, the positions to the right and left are not for the Markan Jesus to give. This episode is later activated by the reference to the criminals “enthroned” on Jesus's right and left at the crucifixion (see below in Chapter Six on 15:27).

101 Though they arrive by a different path and without a view to the thoroughgoing portrait of Mark's Jesus as the *kyriotic* Son from the narrative's beginning, see Ahearne-Kroll, *Jesus' Davidic Suffering*, 161–66; Matera, *Kingship*, 89. See also, Lucien Cerfaux, “Le titre ‘Kyrios’

*synkristic* relationship with Yahweh. But how can it be that Mark's Jesus is both David's "Lord" and his "son"?

### The Crux of the Matter Posed by David's Testimony (12:36)

Despite the fact that the testimony seems to uphold both the Davidic and divine aspects of *kyriotic* sonship, it remains unclear *how* Mark's Jesus can be David's son if he is also David's Lord. Frank Matera proposes that the audience would already know the answer to "how the Messiah can be David's son" because they know that he "is David's son inasmuch as he inherits the divine promises (1:11; 9:7; 12:6), but the origin of his sonship necessarily goes beyond physical descent because Jesus, the Messiah, is the Father's only Son."<sup>102</sup> While Matera rightly draws our attention to the baptism, transfiguration, and the parable of the vineyard tenants as support for the Davidic portrait of the Markan Jesus via his characterization as God's only and royal son, the question posed by the Markan Jesus is not, strictly speaking, "how the Messiah can be David's son." That the Christ is David's son is already strongly supported by the narrative through the rhetoric of inference from 1:1–10:45 and explicitly in 10:46–52 and 11:1–11. Rather, at issue is how can the Markan Jesus be David's son, *given the fact that he is David's Lord*, a status solemnly supported by inspired testimony. Does not his Lordship crowd out the potential for sonship? Put in the language of the parable of the vineyard, how can Mark's Jesus be the "son" who deserves the respect of the tenants, if he can rightly and simultaneously be thought of as the vineyard's "owner" (ὁ κύριος) (cf. 12:7)? This is the riddle set before the audience and left unanswered as the Markan Jesus approaches the passion.

### Both *Kyriotic* and Filial Relation to David? (12:37)

The Markan Jesus finishes his argument for the true nature of Davidic sonship by posing an open-ended and unanswered question: αὐτὸς Δαυὶδ λέγει αὐτὸν κύριον, καὶ πόθεν αὐτοῦ ἐστὶν υἱός; // "David himself calls him 'Lord,' so in what way is he his 'son'?"<sup>103</sup> Posed throughout the narrative, rhetorical questions—particularly those related to the characterization of Mark's Jesus—have created

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et la dignité royale de Jesus," in *Recueil Lucien Cerfaux*, BETL 6–7 (Gembloux: Duculot, 1954), 9.

102 Matera, *Kingship*, 87.

103 On the translation of πόθεν as "in what way" instead of "how," see BDAG s.v. πόθεν 3, particularly when compared to πῶς in 12:35. Cf. BDAG s.v. πῶς 1.a.α–β. So also Hahn, *Titles*, 252–253; Eduard Schweizer, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*, NTD 2 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1968), 146. Cf. Decker, *Mark* 9–16, 136–137.

gaps, leaving vital information unstated which the audience must infer on the basis of context, cultural scripts and schemas, personal experience, and the like.<sup>104</sup> The question posed in 12:37 should be treated no differently.

While Achtemeier has argued that the question implies a negative response,<sup>105</sup> structurally similar questions by no means always do so.<sup>106</sup> Moreover, his contention that “it is only by an over-subtle interpretation (i.e., the  $\pi\acute{\omega}\varsigma$ - $\pi\acute{o}\theta\epsilon\nu$  differentiation), or by drawing on other NT evidence, that a positive statement regarding Jesus as son of David in Mark’s theology can be drawn,”<sup>107</sup> betrays a misunderstanding of the importance of the rhetoric of inference from the beginning of the narrative, to say nothing of the complex matrix of Davidic sonship in Mark’s Gospel. The  $\pi\acute{\omega}\varsigma$ - $\pi\acute{o}\theta\epsilon\nu$  differentiation may well be lost on some in the audience given the unrelenting temporal flow of performance (though it need not be so), but the totality of the narrative, especially the immediate context, nuances and augments traditional understandings of Davidic sonship, rather than forsaking them.

Even if some hearers interpret the question as implying a negative response, they will likely only understand the Markan Jesus as rejecting the view of the *scribes* (12:35), which we have already argued would be aligned with a political conception of Davidic sonship (cf. 11:1–11). The narrative as a whole has labored too intensely by this stage to reject Davidic sonship outright. Indeed, as we have seen, the more natural understanding of the function of questions, when placed before audience members, is to provoke reflection based on the context.<sup>108</sup>

Rather than eliciting a negative response, the question is intended to stir speculation on the part of the audience, fitting what Mary Ann Beavis has called a “catechetical riddle,” which in this case challenges the audience to resolve a seeming paradox: how can David’s Lord also be David’s “son”?<sup>109</sup> The question in 12:37 is not meant to be resolved in this context and so the plethora of diverse scholarly answers to this “son of David question” should not be

104 For a discussion of the theory behind rhetorical questions in ancient reflection on intentional omission, see Chapter Two above.

105 Achtemeier, “And He Followed Him’: Miracles and Discipleship in Mark 10:46–52,” 126–30. Cf. LSJ, s.v.  $\pi\acute{o}\theta\epsilon\nu$ , I.4.

106 Rikki E. Watts, *Isaiah’s New Exodus in Mark*, WUNT 2/88 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), 287. See also, BDAG s.v.  $\pi\acute{o}\theta\epsilon\nu$  3.

107 Achtemeier, “And He Followed Him’: Miracles and Discipleship in Mark 10:46–52,” 129–30.

108 Again, see Chapter Two above.

109 Beavis, “From the Margin to the Way,” 32. Cf. Beavis, *Mark*, 182. Similarly, Peter G. Bolt, *Jesus’ Defeat of Death: Persuading Mark’s Early Readers*, SNTSMS 125 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 250–51; Fowler, *Reader*, 198–99; Robbins, “Bartimaeus,” 240.

surprising. Indeed, they form a modern testimony of their own that we are correct in leaving the question unanswered at this point. While there are hints that might activate the passion as the locus of resolution for the question, nothing is made explicit. The audience is meant to join the large crowd who simply “listened with great delight” (ἤκουεν αὐτοῦ ἡδέως) and, it is implied, pondered in their hearts how the Messiah could be both David’s Lord and David’s “son.”

### Concluding Remarks

Therefore, Mark 12:35–37 suggests to the audience that they eschew the scribal view that the Messiah is the *political* “son of David” (12:35) in favor of the one marshaled by Mark’s Gospel via the rhetoric of inference and substantiated by the explicit testimony of the inspired prophet, David (12:36). The episode ends with an unanswered question that generates reflection on how exactly the *synkristic* relationships of Mark’s Jesus with Yahweh and David actually fit together (12:37).

Audience members would likely engage the question in a variety of ways. While some may understand it as a rejection of Davidic sonship *as understood by the scribes*, others will take it as placing Markan Davidic sonship in dialogue with the *synkristic* assimilation to Yahweh. While some in the audience will perceive that the crucifixion as exaltation is the means by which these twin *synkristic* relationships work together synergistically, others will struggle to traverse the gap until the passion where Jesus’s question in 12:37 will find a dramatic answer: David’s Lord is David’s son inasmuch as he is exalted as “son” (as king) on the throne of the cross.

## In Retrospect: The Narrative Development of *Kyriotic* Sonship

We have covered a great deal of ground in this and the previous chapter, and it now only remains to summarize the discussion to this point. After leaving the prologue, the audience immediately encountered episodes that bolstered those elements of *kyriotic* sonship only latent in the narrative’s beginning. We begin with the *kyriotic* elements.

### *Divine Streams of Kyriotic Sonship*

The earlier chapters offered hints to the more divine, “*kyriotic*,” side of the portrait of Mark’s Jesus, which was often described using language usually reserved for God. The result was that internal scripts assimilating Mark’s Jesus to Yahweh, initially embedded in Mark 1:3 (cf. 1:1), were probably primed, activated, and selected for sense making throughout the narrative. Mark’s Jesus was hailed

as the “Holy One of God” (1:24), after which he forgave a man his sins from his own authority as the “Son of Humanity” (2:5), behavior explicitly linked to activity reserved for “the one God” (2:7). Moments later in the performance, in the same breath that first explicitly connected him with David (2:25), the Markan Jesus offered testimony that, as the “Son of Humanity,” he was “Lord” (2:28). It was as this “Lord” that the Markan Jesus cast out demons and healed the sick (1:21–28; 2:1–12; 3:7–12; 5:1–20).<sup>110</sup> Audience members who had divine scripts and Davidic ones initially activated by the therapeutic activity would have most likely inferred that the Markan Jesus far outstrips David and Solomon, if the Davidic scripts were even consciously considered. The Markan Jesus exercised similar authority over a stormy sea (4:35–41), fed his people as Yahweh had in the wilderness (6:30–44), strode upon the sea itself (6:45–52), and even conversed with Elijah and Moses in God’s place on the new Sinai (9:2–13).

We may imagine that audience members would interpret each of these scenes from 1:3 to 12:37 differently in large part based on their own prior inferences from previous hints and insinuations. Yet, the steady progression from ambiguity to explicit testimony (1:3 to 12:35–37) helps ensure that as many listeners as possible would probably have arrived at the *kyriotic* portrait in their own time. Thus, the narrative envisions a slow and steady winning over of listeners, rather than a simple and unrefined propositional declaration of the *kyriotic* dimensions of Jesus’s characterization in Mark. A few additional comments about this development are in order.

On two occasions, Jesus emphasized the uniqueness of Yahweh, who alone is the one good God in Mark (10:17–22 and 12:28–34). The placement of these seemingly aberrant episodes later in the narrative—after numerous hints at the assimilation of Mark’s Jesus to God—suggests that the evangelist means for the audience to understand that, while Mark’s Jesus is characterized as Yahweh, a simple equation between the two figures will not suffice; having the Markan Jesus distance himself from God ought to prevent the full-on reckoning of Mark’s Jesus as Yahweh. However, the narrative also connects the two characters through the rhetoric of inference at other times (sometimes in the immediate context), and the evangelist is in charge of both Jesus’s hesitancy and the narrative’s forwardness. The result is that audience members are slowly and subtly guided into understanding Mark’s Jesus as *synkristically* assimilated to God, while avoiding a simplistic equation of the two figures.

110 The use of κύριος for the Markan Jesus began in 1:3 (see Chapter Three above); however, we saw above that various other titles, especially those used by demons (1:24; 3:11; 5:7), would likely have activated divine scripts, as well.

In other words, the resistance of Jesus to God-associations significantly delimits the *kyriotic* implications of the rhetoric of inference. Here the narrative placement of both 10:17–22 and 12:28–34 is important since each episode falls after and before (respectively) episodes that strongly depict the Markan Jesus in *kyriotic* dimensions. So, while the evangelist does not provide a theological “category” for the narrative’s characterization of Jesus, Mark does seem concerned that audience members not equate the two.

### *Davidic Streams of Kyriotic Sonship*

In terms of the *synkristic* assimilation to David, the narrative has thus far focused attention on the streams of tradition associated with the installment of the Davidic king, without adopting the associated political connotations (8:27–33; 11:1–11; 12:35–37; cf. 1:11). By avoiding the political ramifications of Davidic sonship, the narrative might provide comfort for audience members hearing the Gospel in the wake of the destruction of Jerusalem—and it might provide a modicum of deniability should anyone infer that the Gospel was anti-Roman.<sup>111</sup> Offering more structure, explicit references to David bracket the entire section, which underscores the more latent portrait (2:23–28; 12:35–37). Finally, previously suppressed scripts related to David’s healing and exorcistic activity would have been reliably selected by audience members via the testimony of blind Bartimaeus, which retroactively shaded the entire the ministry of Mark’s Jesus as “Davidic.” By slowly and steadily building the Davidic portrait, from subtle hints in the prologue to explicit testimony in 10:46–52 and 12:35–37, audience members are given the opportunity to come to the narrative’s Davidic elements on their own. Rather than stating the matter outright, the narrative takes the shrewder and more rhetorically effective route afforded by allusive language, *emphasis*, and rhetorical questions.

### *Concluding Remarks*

The divine and Davidic streams of *kyriotic* sonship are embedded in the prologue and progressively developed, sometimes in overlapping contexts (cf. 2:23–28; 11:1–11; 12:35–37), as the narrative approached Jerusalem. Each episode provides another opportunity for audience members to reevaluate the characterization of Mark’s Jesus in light of new hints and clues, but also based on previous insinuations and inferences. Once the narrative arrives at the healing of Bartimaeus, these twin *synkristic* relationships begin to intersect more explicitly than ever before. By the time the audience reaches the “son of David question,” both aspects of *kyriotic* sonship are ideally now embedded in the

111 See further “To What Ends the Rhetoric of Inference?” in Chapter Seven below.

working memories of audience members. Thus, rather than rejecting Davidic sonship, Mark 12:35–37 primarily functions to place the issue of the two elements of *kyriotic* sonship before the audience for closer reflection.

We find testimonies, some more explicit than others, used as scaffolding throughout the entire narrative, foregrounding Mark's Jesus as "son." While the terminology is not static, the perlocutionary force is fixed on the confirmation of divine and Davidic sonship (3:11; 8:29; 9:7), a confirmation, which is embedded in the testimony of the narrator (1:1) and the divine voice at the baptism (1:11). Other testimonies pepper the narrative, some of which prime or activate the *synkristic* relationship with Yahweh (1:24; 2:28; 5:19–20), while others do the same for the *synkristic* relationship with David (8:29; 10:47–48); Mark 12:35–37 will have probably activated both in succession. The result is that these *testimonia* uphold the narrational portrait resulting from words and actions in the story itself, offering shape to the overall picture of Mark's Jesus as the *kyriotic* Son. Yet, the inner-workings of this portrait of *kyriotic* sonship remain unexplored in the Gospel as the Markan Jesus enters his passion. However, all of this is about to change. After approximately an hour of preparation in performance, the audience will now experience a dramatic response to the question, "David calls him 'Lord,' so in what way is he his 'son'?"



## The Dramatic Portrayal of Mark's Jesus as the *Kyriotic* Son (14:1–16:8)

We now come to the dramatic demonstration of *kyriotic* sonship in Mark's Gospel. This narrative portrait was embedded in the prologue and subsequently both primed and activated throughout the narrative as the story progressively developed the assimilation of Mark's Jesus to Yahweh and David. The rhetoric of inference gained increasing traction from the prologue to 10:46–12:37, where the Davidic aspects of *kyriotic* sonship came into explicit focus. This major section of the story eschewed political connotations of a Davidic connection while maintaining those associated with the therapeutic powers and royal status of a Davidic heir. However, this section also joined the *syn-kristic* assimilation to David and Yahweh through *emphasis* via κύριος, couched in the words of the Markan Jesus (11:3) and by the inspired testimony of David that the Messiah was “Lord” (12:36). All the while, however, the question of *how* the Davidic and divine streams of *kyriotic* sonship work together in the portrait of Mark's Jesus has received no answer (12:37). As the Markan Jesus enters his passion, an unanswered question hangs in the air: “David calls him ‘Lord,’ so how can he be his ‘son’?”

In order to address this question, we will discuss the episodes in 14:1–16:8 most relevant for understanding the narrational demonstration of Mark's Jesus as the *kyriotic* Son, particularly in relation to the question posed in 12:37. As we shall see, David's Lord will be ironically exalted as David's son—Mark's Davidic King—amidst mockery and beatings often cast using language associated with scripts for righteous suffering.

Given the importance of “righteous suffering” to the demonstration of *kyriotic* sonship, we begin this chapter with a brief overview of this notion, especially in relation to Mark's passion.

### Righteous Suffering and Mark's Passion

The notion of righteous suffering was widespread in Jewish literature before and during the first century of the Common Era. Sometimes described as a “motif,” a righteous sufferer schema was articulated nearly half a century ago by Lothar Ruppert in his *Der leidende Gerechte und seine Feinde: Eine*

*Wortfelduntersuchung*<sup>1</sup> and *Jesus als der leidende Gerechte? Der Weg Jesu im Lichte eines alt- und zwischentestamentlichen Motivs*.<sup>2</sup> In the first volume (*Der leidende Gerechte*), Ruppert canvassed the Psalms, Isaiah, and extra-canonical Jewish literature for the tradition of the righteous sufferer. His second volume (*Jesus als der leidende Gerechte?*) sought to understand the use of these traditions in the Gospels' passion narratives. Ruppert synthesized the material into "three different lines of development of the motif" (*Drei verschiedenen Entwicklungslinien des Motivs*) from Jewish literature: (1) "Wisdom" (e.g., Pss 34, 37); (2) "Eschatological" (e.g., 1QH x–xvi, which uses language of the psalms of individual lament to cast the Teacher of Righteousness as a righteous figure, suffering at the hands of the Wicked Priest, who attempts to put him on trial and condemn him to death [e.g., Ps 37; 4QpPs<sup>a</sup> iv, 7–8]); and (3) "Apocalyptic" (e.g., Isaiah 52–53).<sup>3</sup>

George Nickelsburg came out with a book that same year, which focused on the common narrative of the persecution, exaltation, and/or vindication of a righteous sufferer, rooted in the story of Joseph, from Genesis to the Books of the Maccabees (Gen 37; Ahiqar; Esth; Dan 3 and 6; Sus; 2 Macc 7; 3 Macc).<sup>4</sup> Nickelsburg focuses exclusively on literary narratives<sup>5</sup> that contain some version of the following common elements: reason, conspiracy, accusation, trial, reactions, choice, ordeal, help, condemnation, protest, trust, rescue, exaltation, investiture, proclamation, acclamation, reaction, vindication, confession, and the punishment of the enemy. Above all, these stories revolved around a central righteous figure, set upon by wicked people.<sup>6</sup> Regarding the Gospel of Mark, Nickelsburg has argued elsewhere that the passion narrative is

shaped after the genre found in Genesis 34–45, Esther, Daniel 3 and 6, 2 Maccabees 7, and Wisdom of Solomon 2 and 5; and it is enhanced by

1 Lothar Ruppert, *Der leidende Gerechte und seine Feinde: Eine Wortfelduntersuchung*, FzB 5 (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1972).

2 Lothar Ruppert, *Jesus als der leidende Gerechte? Der Weg Jesu im Lichte eines alt- und zwischentestamentlichen Motivs* (Stuttgart: KBW Verlag, 1972).

3 Ruppert, *Jesus als der leidende Gerechte?*, 1–28.

4 See George W. E. Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life in Intertestamental Judaism and Early Christianity* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1972).

5 Thus the psalms are excluded from Nickelsburg's study.

6 Tracing these stories makes up the lion's share of the book. See Nickelsburg, *Resurrection*, 48–111.

details that reflect haggadic exegesis of the canonical Psalms about the persecution and vindication of the righteous one.<sup>7</sup>

Whether or not Nickelsburg is correct that the suffering elements in the Markan passion constitute participation in a particular genre is a matter that falls outside the scope of this project. However, I do find myself asking the same question Holly Carey has posed, "Why regard these elements as parts of a genre, rather than being merely points of contact with prior stories of Righteous Sufferers?"<sup>8</sup> Stephen Ahearne-Kroll has judged similarly and focused particularly on the intersection of Mark's Gospel and David as a righteous sufferer.<sup>9</sup>

Ahearne-Kroll has challenged what he believes to be an overly cohesive portrayal of the evidence for this "righteous sufferer" motif by Ruppert. For Ahearne-Kroll, this spells the end of the motif itself.<sup>10</sup> Instead, we are to think particularly of the Davidic nature of the psalms of lament, which, when introduced into the Markan passion, cast Jesus's suffering in a Davidic light.<sup>11</sup> Ahearne-Kroll seems correct to challenge the rigid distinction between streams within a "righteous sufferer" motif, but should discontinuity be allowed to crowd out the obvious points of continuity among the texts adduced by Ruppert and Nickelsburg?<sup>12</sup> However, it does seem probable that those familiar with the idea that David was the author of the psalms of individual lament might infer that appropriating Davidic psalms necessarily involves David at some level. The use of the τῷ Δαυὶδ superscripts in Pss 21; 40; 41–42; 68; 108 LXX, as well as texts like 11QPs<sup>a</sup> XXVII, 2–11, which attributes a myriad of psalms, poems, and incantations to David, support the idea that the psalms of individual lament will have been considered to convey the voice of David by many.

7 George W. E. Nickelsburg, *Ancient Judaism and Christian Origins: Diversity, Continuity, and Transformation* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 111. Cf. idem, "The Genre and Function of the Markan Passion Narrative," *HTR* 73 (1980): 153–84.

8 Holly J. Carey, *Jesus' Cry From the Cross: Towards a First-Century Understanding of the Intertextual Relationship between Psalm 22 and the Narrative of Mark's Gospel* (LNTS 398; London: T&T Clark, 2009), 133–134.

9 See Stephen P. Ahearne-Kroll, *The Psalms of Lament in Mark's Passion: Jesus' Davidic Suffering*, SNTSMS 142 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 13–16.

10 See Ahearne-Kroll, *The Psalms of Lament in Mark's Passion*, 13–16.

11 See similarly Adela Yarbro Collins, "The Appropriation of the Individual Psalms of Lament by Mark," in *The Scriptures in the Gospels*, ed. Christopher M. Tuckett, BETL 131 (Louvain: Leuven University Press, 1997), 226.

12 For further discussion of the shortcomings of Ahearne-Kroll's disavowal of the righteous sufferer motif, see Carey, *Jesus' Cry From the Cross*, 126–38. Why not instead understand David as one of many righteous sufferers?

It would seem to say too much, however, to go on to posit a motif of “Davidic suffering,” if by that one means enduring physical harm. It must be kept in mind that these psalms are poetry and served a particular liturgical function in Jewish communities.<sup>13</sup> That said, the early Christian context of Mark’s Gospel provided an occasion for new interpretations and appropriations of the psalms of individual lament based on the suffering of Jesus. As Yarbrow Collins writes,

If reading, singing, or chanting of the psalms was part of the communal worship of the followers of Jesus from the time of his death onward, these oral performances of the psalms, perhaps associated with homilies or other forms of teaching, may have been the occasion for the re-reading of the psalms of individual lament with reference to the death of Jesus.<sup>14</sup>

For our purposes, it is only vital that scripts for those suffering unjustly at the hands of wicked people were available in the first-century world, which, as we have seen, is well supported by diverse textual evidence from the LXX and Qumran.<sup>15</sup> Whether or not there is a “righteous sufferer motif”<sup>16</sup> or widespread memory of David, in particular, as a righteous sufferer (literally or metaphorically) is a matter of debate that cannot be adequately adjudicated in this setting.<sup>17</sup>

Most recently, Holly Carey has sought to treat the allocation of this righteous sufferer motif in Mark’s Gospel itself as part of her treatment of the use of

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13 On which, see Yarbrow Collins, “Appropriation,” 224–27. See further Carey, *Jesus’ Cry From the Cross*, 126–38. Cf. James W. McKinnon, “On the Question of Psalmody in the Ancient Synagogue,” *EMH* 6 (1986): 159.

14 Yarbrow Collins, “Appropriation,” 230–31.

15 Again, see Ruppert, *Der leidende Gerechte und seine Feinde*; Ruppert, *Jesus als der leidende Gerechte?*; Nickelsburg, *Resurrection, Immortality, and Eternal Life*; Carey, *Jesus’ Cry From the Cross*.

16 Thus the existence of *scripts* for “righteous suffering,” or those associated with “righteous sufferers,” does not confirm or deny whether there is an actual righteous sufferer motif in Jewish literature. My argument only capitalizes on what Ruppert, Nickelsburg, Carey, and others have demonstrated: people are often described as suffering righteously, and language from psalms of individual lament and Deutero-Isaiah have been recruited to so describe the physical and emotional anguish of these individuals.

17 But see 4QMMT<sup>e</sup> (4Q398) 14–17 II, 1–2 and LAB 62:5–6 (cf. 1 Sam 20:1 LXX). See also Ahearne-Kroll, *Jesus’ Davidic Suffering*, 40–58; 82–136. While these texts do not *focus* on David as a sufferer, they do seem to presuppose it.

Ps 22 in the Markan passion.<sup>18</sup> In her treatment of the socio-cultural contexts of Mark's Gospel, she demonstrates that Ps 22 (21 LXX) was alluded to in Wis 2–5,<sup>19</sup> Odes Sol.,<sup>20</sup> Jos. Asen.,<sup>21</sup> and the Hodayot<sup>22</sup> of Qumran.<sup>23</sup> In each instance, Ps 22 is used to portray the physical suffering and/or emotional/mental abuse of each protagonist as “one who experiences persecution from his/her enemies and seeks deliverance from God.”<sup>24</sup> For Carey, the “writer of Wis 2–5 understood the psalmist to be a Righteous Sufferer figure,” just as the Hodayot provides evidence that Ps 22 could be used to “describe the circumstances of the Teacher of Righteousness and his community.”<sup>25</sup> Even if one were to disagree with any of the particulars of Carey's analysis, she has provided convincing evidence for the existence of scripts for “righteous suffering” available for priming and activating within the milieu of the earliest experiences of Mark's Gospel.

The work of Ruppert, Nickelsburg, and Carey offer strong evidence to conclude that (1) there were scripts associated with righteous suffering in Jewish culture long before the first century CE; and (2) these scripts were applied to specific individuals in order to cast them as “righteous” over against their “wicked” persecutors. As we shall see below, informed audience members will have scripts for righteous suffering primed or activated by allusive language from the psalms and Deutero-Isaiah as they experience the suffering and ironic exaltation of David's Lord as (Mark's version of) David's royal son.

We find an analogy for this sort of appropriation in the texts found in the Hodayot from Qumran, where the Teacher of Righteousness is cast as the speaker of Ps 41:10 in 1QH XIII, 24–26.<sup>26</sup> Whether this casts the Teacher of Righteousness in allusive language for David or more generally as a sort of righteous sufferer is less important in this setting than the fact that the allusive language taps into scripts associated with the suffering of a righteous figure, who hopes for vindication.

18 See Carey, *Jesus' Cry From the Cross*, 126–38.

19 E.g., Wis 2:12; 5:4 (cf. Ps 22:7 [21:7 LXX]); Wis 2:18 (cf. Ps 22:9 [21:9 LXX]).

20 E.g., Odes Sol. 28:2–3 (cf. Ps 22:10–11 [21:10–11]).

21 E.g., Jos. Asen. 12:9, 11 (cf. Ps 22:14 [21:14 LXX]); Jos. Asen. 13:9 (cf. Ps 22:16a [21:16a LXX]).

22 E.g., 1QH X, 33–35 (cf. Ps 22:7); 1QH XIII, 6–19 (cf. Ps 22:14, 22); 1QH XII, 33–34 (cf. Ps 22:15); 1QH XVI, 33–34 (cf. Ps 22:15); 1QH XIII, 31 (cf. Ps 22:16); 1QH VII, 15–17; XI, 9–10; XVII, 29–36 (cf. Ps 22:10–11).

23 Carey, *Jesus' Cry From the Cross*, 94–125.

24 Carey, *Jesus' Cry From the Cross*, 124.

25 Carey, *Jesus' Cry From the Cross*, 124.

26 On which, see Yarbro Collins, “Appropriation,” 226.

Even if Ruppert may go too far in offering such structure to what was surely more fluid and organic, he—along with Nickelsburg and Carey—have offered secure evidence for the existence of scripts for righteous suffering “in the air” in the first-century of the Common Era. The ubiquity of “righteous sufferer” patterns in Jewish literature, which were appropriated in different contexts, including as speech by others, complements what we find in Mark’s Gospel. There are hints throughout the narrative that Mark’s Jesus fits established patterns for righteous suffering, which prepares the hearers for the passion and resurrection narratives (e.g., Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:33–34; cf. 11:18). Moreover, texts from the psalms of individual lament and Deutero-Isaiah are interwoven into the fabric of the narrative in ways that, if detected, might activate scripts for righteous suffering in the minds of informed audience members. As we shall see, some of this allusive language will be more easily heard than others, but its presence is nevertheless important for the characterization of Mark’s Jesus as the *kyriotic* Son.

In what follows, the focus is only on the episodes most important for the presentation of Mark’s Jesus as David’s Lord, who is exalted as David’s “son” on the throne of his cross. We begin with the diverse set of testimonies offered before the Sanhedrin in 14:55–65.

### Testimonies before Sanhedrin (14:55–65)

The audience has been cued to anticipate the Markan Jesus’s impending betrayal, suffering, death, and resurrection through the anointing at Bethany (14:1–9), Judas’s betrayal (14:10–11; cf. 14:17–21), Jesus’s subsequent arrest (14:43–52), and the plans for his post-mortem reunion with the disciples in Galilee (14:28). By this point, even the dumbest or inattentive members of the audience would now be ready for the climax of the narrative, where prophecies of Jesus’s passion and resurrection are about to be fulfilled (cf. 8:31; 9:31; 10:32–34). With this in mind, we turn to the first of the testimonies before the Sanhedrin.

### *False Testimony that Rings True (14:55–60)*

After the Markan Jesus is arrested, he is brought before the whole Sanhedrin. That they are searching for evidence (μαρτυρίαν) against Jesus primes the audience to think in juridical terms of witness, testimony, and confirmation/refutation.<sup>27</sup> This cue is bolstered by the repetition (*conduplicatio*/ἀναδιπλωσις)

27 This aspect of Mark’s passion is seldom recognized, though it left a powerful impact on one of its earliest interpreters. For a full study of these aspects carried over into the Lukan

of the μάρτυς word group, which occurs 6 times over the span of 72 spoken words.<sup>28</sup> For those in the audience whose ears are attuned to this theme of testimony, there will likely be an increased level of pity for the Markan Jesus.<sup>29</sup>

The first testimony is explicitly labeled, “false testimony” (ἐψευδομαρτύρουν) and even these witnesses do not agree in their slander: ἡμεῖς ἠκούσαμεν αὐτοῦ λέγοντος ὅτι ἐγὼ καταλύσω τὸν ναὸν τούτον τὸν χειροποίητον καὶ διὰ τριῶν ἡμερῶν ἄλλον ἀχειροποίητον οἰκοδομήσω (14:58). The charge itself is ambiguous,<sup>30</sup> and there has been much debate over whether, or to what degree, the testimony should be considered “false.” For example, Adela Yarbro Collins, among others, takes the testimony to be false either because it attributes the destruction and rebuilding of the temple to the Markan Jesus and not to God, or because the author no longer expects a physical temple on earth by the time of the composition of the Gospel.<sup>31</sup> Others, like Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, simply contend that the scene itself is one in which those speaking against the Markan Jesus cannot be trusted; while the statement is false in the Markan narrative, one should look for its narrative *function*, which offers both flashbacks and flashes forward.<sup>32</sup> On the other hand, Joel Marcus is representative of those who maintain that the evangelist probably recognizes “an element of truth” in the testimony since “Jesus did on the third day found the church, a Temple not made with hands, by raising from the dead” (see below).<sup>33</sup> The level of disagreement

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passion, see Heather M. Gorman, *Interweaving Innocence: A Rhetorical Analysis of Luke's Passion Narrative* (Luke 22:66–23:49) (Eugene, Ore.: Pickwick, 2015).

- 28 μαρτυρίαν (14:55), ἐψευδομαρτύρουν (14:56), μαρτυρίαι (14:56b), ἐψευδομαρτύρουν (14:57), μαρτυρία (14:59), καταμαρτυροῦσιν (14:60).
- 29 According to Ps-Cicero, *conduplicatio* (ἀναδίπλωσις) is used by repeating a word for the purpose of amplification or appeal to pity (Rhet. Her. 4.28.38). While the figure was also used simply to add force to the argument at hand, because this repetition comes from the narrator directly rather than characters in the story, it is best understood as heightening the emotional intensity of the episode while also increasing the force of the coming narrative portrait of Mark's Jesus as the suffering *kyriotic* Son.
- 30 So also Robert M. Fowler, *Let the Reader Understand: Reader-Response Criticism and the Gospel of Mark* (Harrisburg: Trinity, 1996), 158.
- 31 Adela Yarbro Collins, *Mark: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 703. Cf. Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2002), 302; Dieter Lührmann, “Markus 14,55–64: Christologie und Zerstörung des Tempels im Markusevangelium,” *NTS* 27 (1981): 457–74.
- 32 Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, *Narrative Space and Mythic Meaning in Mark* (New York: Harper & Row, 1986), 120–26.
- 33 Joel Marcus, *Mark 8–16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 27A (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 1004. Cf. Donald H. Juel, *Messiah and Temple: The Trial of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark*, SBLDS 31 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature,



among interpreters should not be surprising since the text does not supply a reason that the testimony is deemed false. Thus, this (false?) testimony creates a gap—for the ancient audience and later interpreters alike.<sup>34</sup>

Mark 13:2 may be activated as hearers work to fill this gap. In this line from the Olivet discourse, the Markan Jesus foretells the destruction of the temple, though it is not clear whether the destroyer is the Markan Jesus or God since the verb is passive.<sup>35</sup> Those in the audience who understand God as the actor would consider the testimony false because the witnesses will seem to have misconstrued the teaching of the Markan Jesus. And yet, perceptive members of the audience may interpret the testimony as ironically true.

As discussed in Chapter Two, bending an opponent's words to suit your own argument was not unheard of in the first century, as Quintilian attests (*Inst.* 5.11.43). The technique worked from the following logic: If an opponent argues "X, therefore Y," it was possible to grant X, but subvert and reject Y. So, "X, therefore not Y."<sup>36</sup> In the present context, there is a sense in which the central claim of the witnesses is true and granted by the Markan narrative, yet the implication is *not* that the Markan Jesus is a fraud, *but rather* that he is the rightful "son": Not only did the Markan Jesus speak regularly against the temple and

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1977), 127–215; John R. Donahue, S.J., *Are You the Christ?: The Trial Narrative in the Gospel of Mark*, SBLDS 10 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1973), 72.

34 For a thorough, albeit a decidedly historically bent, discussion of the variety of issues pertaining to the falsity of the testimony and the diverse scholarly judgments surrounding those issues, see Raymond E. Brown, *The Death of the Messiah: From Gethsemane to the Grave, a Commentary on the Passion Narratives in the Four Gospels* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 444–60. Cf. Donahue, S.J., *Are You the Christ?*, 103–84.

35 καὶ ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· βλέπετε ταύτας τὰς μεγάλας οἰκοδομὰς; οὐ μὴ ἀφεθῇ ὧδε λίθος ἐπὶ λίθον ὃς οὐ μὴ καταλυθῇ (Mark 13:2). While explicit evidence for an LXX or broadly Jewish expectation that the Messiah would destroy the temple is difficult to find, the role is regularly attributed to God (cf. LXX 2 Chron 36:17–21; Jer 26; Ezek 9:7–8; 10:18–19; 11:22–23; 1 En. 90:28). See, however, Dan 9:26–27 Theod., where an "anointed one" (χρίσμα) will destroy "the city and sanctuary." Cf. Marcus, *Mark 8–16*, 1003; Juel, *Messiah and Temple*, 197. See also Brant James Pitre, *Jesus, the Tribulation, and the End of the Exile: Restoration Eschatology and the Origin of the Atonement*, WUNT 2/204 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 374 n. 364. On the problems created by simply taking God as the referent on the basis of a so-called "divine passive," see Benjamin Pascut, "The So-Called *Passivum Divinum* in Mark's Gospel," *NovT* 54 (2012): 313–33.

36 On the appropriation and reversal of an opponent's argument, see Andrew M. Riggsby, "Appropriation and Reversal as a Basis for Oratorical Proof," *CP* 90 (1995): 245–56. See further on "Inference Generation in Ancient Rhetorical Theory" in Chapter Two above.

predict its demise (11:12–25; 12:1–12; 13:1–2),<sup>37</sup> but those familiar with the whole story of Mark's Gospel may anticipate the symbolic destruction of the temple at Jesus's death.<sup>38</sup>

Moreover, the juxtaposition of a temple “made with hands” and one “not made with hands”<sup>39</sup> is left ambiguous by the narrative, encouraging listeners to infer that, in his resurrection, the Markan Jesus's body would metaphorically constitute a new temple. The fact that the Markan Jesus has already been implicitly linked with the chief cornerstone (κεφαλῆς γωνίας) would prompt audience members to understand the ἀχειροποίητος temple in 14:58 as the building foretold in the parable of the wicked vineyard tenants (12:10–12), especially considering that the Markan Jesus had already prophesied the demise of the temple in Jerusalem (13:1–2).

This string of temple stories, which climaxes with the tearing of the temple curtain in 15:29, works synergistically and telescopically to extend the audience's understanding of their own relation to the temple vis-à-vis the Markan Jesus's body.<sup>40</sup> Moreover, the temporal marker διὰ τριῶν ἡμερῶν would activate the earlier intimations in 8:31, 9:31, 10:34 that the Markan Jesus would be raised “in three days.”<sup>41</sup> Those for whom the resurrection prophecies were activated may also think of Mark 12:1–12 in which the temple is destroyed by the κύριος in the wake of the death of his son (cf. 12:10–11).<sup>42</sup> Yarbrow Collins and others have objected that difference in prepositions (μετά/ἐν/δίᾳ) would

37 So also Kelly R. Iverson, “Jews, Gentiles, and the Kingdom of God: The Parable of the Wicked Tenants in Narrative Perspective (Mark 12:1–12),” *BibInt* 20 (2012): 305–35.

38 Similarly, Donald Juel, *Mark* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1990), 204; *A Master of Surprise: Mark Interpreted* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), 82. On the plurality of meanings evoked by this divine testimony in 15:38, see below.

39 On the critique implied by “made with hands,” a phrase associated with idols throughout the LXX, see Marcus, *Mark* 8–16, 1004.

40 Cf. Mark 11:12–25; 12:1–12; 13:1–2; 14:55–58; 15:29. Similarly, Iverson, “Jews, Gentiles, and the Kingdom of God,” 328.

41 Cf. Mark 8:31 (καὶ μετὰ τρεῖς); 9:31 (καὶ μετὰ τρεῖς); 10:34 (καὶ μετὰ τρεῖς); 14:58 (διὰ τριῶν ἡμερῶν); 15:29 (ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις). So also Kirsten Marie Hartvigsen, *Prepare the Way of the Lord: Towards a Cognitive Poetic Analysis of Audience Involvement with Characters and Events in the Markan World*, BZNW 180 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012), 481; Marcus, *Mark* 8–16, 1004; John R. Donahue and Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Mark*, SP 2 (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2002), 421–22; John Paul Heil, *The Gospel of Mark as Model for Action: A Reader-Response Commentary* (New York: Paulist, 1992), 313; Joachim Gnllka, *Das Evangelium nach Markus*, 2 vols., EKKNT 2 (Neukirchen: Neukirchener, 1978), 2.280.

42 Cf. Mark 11:12–25; 13:1–37.

prevent audience members from inferring resurrection.<sup>43</sup> However, while the preposition is not static, the timespan (three days) is, and the use of “three days” terminology together with language of demolition and construction is highly suggestive of “resurrection”<sup>44</sup> for people at all familiar with first-century Christian scripts concerning Jesus’s resurrection. Indeed, the propensity of the minds of modern interpreters to jump to Jesus’s resurrection “three days” later *despite the difference in prepositions* is suggestive that similar scripts would be likewise activated for ancient listeners during this episode. Thus, the gap created by the “false” testimony may prompt some listeners to infer that the new temple “not made with hands”<sup>45</sup> would be identified with the body of the Markan Jesus. It is this body that will become the “cornerstone of the new community,”<sup>46</sup> which replaces the temple and its cult.<sup>47</sup>

This cornerstone was sometimes associated with Israel or its Davidic king.<sup>48</sup> Most relevant, during the first century, it was associated with Solomon’s rebuilding of the temple.<sup>49</sup> Given the Solomonic associations encouraged by the *synkristic* assimilation of Mark’s Jesus to David thus far in the narrative,<sup>50</sup> audience members familiar with Jewish schemas and scripts reflected in texts like T. Sol. 22–23 would be encouraged to understand the rebuilding language in 14:58 in terms of the Solomonic rebuilding of the temple associated with

43 See Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 702; Robert H. Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 900–01; Rudolf Pesch, *Das Markusevangelium: Kommentar zu Kap. 8,27–16,20*, vol. 2, 2 vols., HTKNT 2 (Freiburg: Herder, 1991), 434. Cf. Mary Ann Beavis, *Mark*, Paideia (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011), 221.

44 That is, these elements are all linked to the mental lexicon’s entry to “Jesus’s resurrection” (according to Mark and early Christian tradition). To activate one (e.g., “three days”) primes or activates them all. See further Chapter Two above.

45 Yarbrow Collins is correct that, in the Markan context, ἄλλον [ναόν] ἀχειροποίητος most likely refers to the “apocalyptic notion of an eschatological eternal temple of divine origin” (703). The labeling of the first temple as χειροποίητος casts doubt on its legitimacy by characterizing it as nothing more than a building made by human effort. See Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 703. Cf. Donahue and Harrington, *Mark*, 421.

46 On the use of “temple” as a metaphor for a community elsewhere in the NT, see 1 Cor 3:16–17, 2 Cor 6:16; Eph 2:21. The term is used similarly in the writings of the Stoa and Qurman. See further Bas M. F. van Iersel, *Mark: A Reader-Response Commentary*, LNTS 164 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 446.

47 Hartvigsen, *Prepare*, 481. Cf. Aage Pilgaard, *Kommentar til Markusevangeliet* (Aarhus: Aarhus Universitetsforlag, 2008), 356; Moloney, *Mark*, 303; van Iersel, *Mark*, 446; Heil, *Mark*, 313; Juel, *Messiah and Temple*, 127–215. Similarly, Malbon, *Narrative Space*, 120–26.

48 Ps 117:22 LXX; cf. Mark 12:10–11.

49 T. Sol. 23.1–4; cf. 22.7–9.

50 See Chapters Three and Four above.

Ps 117:22 LXX, which is itself linked the death and resurrection of Mark's Jesus.<sup>51</sup> In other words, the scripts associated with Solomon's rebuilding of the temple would probably activate the *synkristic* assimilation to David.

Conversely, since the rebuilding of this temple was sometimes also associated with the final act of God,<sup>52</sup> the "false" testimony may activate the *synkristic* assimilation of Mark's Jesus to Yahweh. In this case, despite the fact that dubious characters leveled this testimony, perceptive audience members may find more truth embedded in the scene than first appears. Mark's Jesus has already shared in the names and activities of Yahweh over the course of the narrative, beginning in the prologue.<sup>53</sup> This inside information has elevated the audience and thus potentially changes their valuation of the quality of the testimony in terms of the overall characterization of Mark's Jesus.<sup>54</sup> Of course, both Davidic and divine scripts may be useful during later reflection, but audience members will unconsciously select one or the other based on the context during the performance itself; in this case, the context would seem to favor the assimilation to David.<sup>55</sup>

This use of *emphasis* is a familiar one for those in the audience, as we have seen from our discussions in Chapters Three to Five. It leverages narrational ambiguity to encourage the audience to fill in the gaps on their own using both narrative context and "offstage" information.<sup>56</sup> By leaving the precise nature of the testimony ambiguous, the narrative prompts speculation. In so doing, it directs listeners to understand the testimony as ironically supporting the characterization of Mark's Jesus as a royal Davidic messiah, whose death and resurrection would mean the symbolic destruction of the temple (15:38) and the metaphorical rebuilding of the temple of his body (cf. 16:6–7).<sup>57</sup> Moreover,

51 Mark 12:1–12; cf. 8:31; 9:31; 10:34.

52 See, e.g., Exod 15:17 LXX; Jub. 1.13; Tob 13:16; 1 En. 90.28–29; 91.13; 2 Esdr 10.54; 4QFlor. Cf. van Iersel, *Mark*, 446.

53 See Chapter Three above. Cf. Mark 1:3; 1:7–8; 12–13.

54 Similarly, van Iersel, *Mark*, 446; Heil, *Mark*, 312–13.

55 See further Morton Ann Gernsbacher and Mark Faust, "Skilled Suppression," in *Interference and Inhibition in Cognition*, ed. F. N. Dempster and C. N. Brainerd (San Diego, CA: Academic Press, 1995), 295–327; Morton Gernsbacher and Michael P. Kaschak, "Text Comprehension," in *The Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Psychology*, ed. Daniel Reisberg (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 467–73.

56 This use of *emphasis* falls into the category of *emphasis per consequentiam* (*emphasis* through logical consequence). Cf. Rhet. Her. 4.54.67. See Chapter Two for further rhetorical discussion.

57 Novakovic also notes the potential for intentional ambiguity in this episode. See Lidija Novakovic, *Raised from the Dead According to Scripture: The Role of the Old Testament in*

the association of the Markan Jesus with the destruction of the temple in 14:58 might further activate the *synkristic* assimilation of Mark's Jesus to Yahweh, who was believed to be the ultimate builder of the eschatological temple. Lastly, the high priest's query, "Have you no answer? What is it that they testify against you?"—a query met with utter silence (14:61)—would naturally draw audience reflection and participation as they consider the nature of the testimony and the aforementioned facets of truth buried for discovery.<sup>58</sup> However, as the performance moves forward, the time for reflection passes and the Markan Jesus faces the high priest directly and offers testimony of his own.

### *The High Priest's Question (Mark 14:61)*

The high priest initially questions the Markan Jesus whether he has any response to the Temple charges leveled against him (14:60). Jesus's deafening silence before the high priest may activate Jewish scripts for righteous suffering in which the righteous one stands silently amidst the ridicule. The matrix of psalms of individual lament cast the speaker (ostensibly David, based on the superscript) as silent before the wicked, who plot against him.<sup>59</sup> For example, the psalmist laments (in the voice of David), "But as for me, I, like a deaf man, would not hear, and (I am) like a mute who does not open his mouth. I became like a person who does not hear and has no refutations in his mouth" (Ps 37:14–15 LXX).<sup>60</sup> A silent righteous sufferer is also found in the servant passages from Isa 40–55: "And he, because he has been ill-treated, does not open his mouth; like a sheep, he was led to slaughter and as a lamb is silent before the one shearing it, so does he not open his mouth" (Isa 53:7 LXX).<sup>61</sup> These texts point to a common script for righteous suffering that could be activated for informed audience members, whether or not any specific text is activated.

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*the Early Christian Interpretations of Jesus' Resurrection* (New York: T&T Clark, 2014), 189, who rightly observes that Matthew resolves this ambiguity (26:59–61).

- 58 On truth veiled in the false testimony, see Moloney, *Mark*, 303. Cf. Eugene LaVerdiere, *The Beginning of the Gospel: Introducing the Gospel according to Mark*, 2 vols. (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical, 1999), 2.261–64; Donald Senior, *The Passion of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark* (Wilmington, Del.: M. Glazier, 1984), 91–94.
- 59 See, esp., Ps 37:14–15 LXX; cf. 26:12; 34:11 LXX. Ahearne-Kroll, *Jesus' Davidic Suffering*, 193–96; Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 704.
- 60 ἐγὼ δὲ ὡσεὶ κωφὸς οὐκ ἤκουον καὶ ὡσεὶ ἄλαλος οὐκ ἀνοίγων τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐγενόμην ὡσεὶ ἄνθρωπος οὐκ ἀκούων καὶ οὐκ ἔχων ἐν τῷ στόματι αὐτοῦ ἐλεγμούς. Similarly, Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 704.
- 61 καὶ αὐτὸς διὰ τὸ κεκακῶσθαι οὐκ ἀνοίγει τὸ στόμα· ὡς πρόβατον ἐπὶ σφαγὴν ἤχθη καὶ ὡς ἄμνος ἐναντίον τοῦ κείροντος αὐτὸν ἄφωνος οὕτως οὐκ ἀνοίγει τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ. So, e.g., Joel Marcus, *The Way of the Lord: Christological Exegesis of the Old Testament in the Gospel of Mark* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1992), 187.

The high priest eventually breaks the silence himself:  $\sigma\upsilon \epsilon\acute{\iota} \delta\acute{o} \chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{o}\varsigma \delta\acute{o} \upsilon\acute{\iota}\delta\varsigma \tau\omicron\upsilon \epsilon\upsilon\lambda\omicron\gamma\eta\tau\omicron\upsilon$ ; The surface meaning intended by the character is obvious enough: the high priest asks the Markan Jesus directly whether or not he is the “Messiah, the son of the Blessed,” that is, the son of God.<sup>62</sup> This question uses the familiar terms  $\delta\acute{o} \chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$  and  $\delta\acute{o} \upsilon\acute{\iota}\delta\varsigma$  that will reliably activate the earlier episodes that clarified Mark’s Jesus’s characterization as “Messiah” (11:1–11; 12:35–37) and “son.”<sup>63</sup> As sympathetic audience members hear the high priest’s question, they will likely answer that the Markan Jesus certainly is God’s son, but not in the way the high priest is asking.<sup>64</sup> These listeners will be confirmed in this understanding by Jesus’s testimony offered in response (see below), which matches the narrative characterization that audience members have been constructing since the prologue.<sup>65</sup>

However, while the high priest’s words are taken as a question on the surface (it is an *interrogation*, after all), some have argued that the question should be understood as an unwitting testimony to the sonship of Mark’s Jesus. For example, Marcus has suggested that the high priest’s question turns out to form “one of several ironic instances in the Markan passion narrative in which the enemies of Jesus inadvertently proclaim the very Christological truths they abhor.”<sup>66</sup> But might we really expect the audience to grasp the question as ironic testimony? The vast majority of scholars do not even entertain the notion.<sup>67</sup> Nevertheless, Donald Juel and others have suggested that the high priest should be understood as one more person in the Markan narrative who speaks better than he knows.<sup>68</sup> To be sure, in a literary paradigm, it is not so difficult to imagine. Donahue notes the syntactical similarity between 14:61 and other testimonies where  $\sigma\upsilon \epsilon\acute{\iota}$  is used (on which see below). In this line of

62 The title  $\delta\acute{o} \upsilon\acute{\iota}\delta\varsigma \tau\omicron\upsilon \epsilon\upsilon\lambda\omicron\gamma\eta\tau\omicron\upsilon$  should not be distinguished from other titles that refer to God’s son. Here the character uses particularly Jewish parlance since that would be most fitting for the high priest; this is another instance of *prosopopoeia*. For more on *prosopopoeia*, see, e.g., Theon, *Prog.* 115–118. Cf. Ps-Hermogenes, *Prog.* 20–21.

63 Mark 1:1; 1:10; 3:11; 5:7; 9:7. Cf. 2:10; 2:28; 8:31; 8:38; 9:9; 9:12; 9:31; 10:33; 10:45; 13:26; 14:21; 14:41.

64 See similarly on 12:35–37 in Chapter Five above.

65 Similarly, Hartvigsen, *Prepare*, 482.

66 Marcus, *Mark* 8–16, 1016. Similarly, Mary Ann Beavis, “The Trial before the Sanhedrin (Mark 14:53–65): Reader Response and Greco-Roman Readers,” *CBQ* 49 (1987): 584, following Donahue, s.j., *Are You the Christ?*, 88.

67 Juel is foremost among those who do; see his *Messiah and Temple*, 77–107; idem, *Mark*, 227. See also, Marcus, *Mark* 8–16, 1016; Beavis, “Trial,” 584, following Donahue, s.j., *Are You the Christ?*, 88.

68 Juel, *Mark*, 227. Cf. idem, *Messiah and Temple*, 77–107, in which Juel writes, “It is the high priest himself who testifies to the truth [of the identity of Mark’s Jesus], quite against his intentions” (84).



thinking, the parallel syntactical structure insinuates an unwitting testimony from the high priest.<sup>69</sup> Moreover, Marcus suggests that the introductory comment of the narrator in 14:60a, ἐπηρώτα αὐτὸν καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ, “suggests that the high priest’s words can be interpreted as both a question and a statement.”<sup>70</sup> Richard Swanson has recently followed suit by making the argument that the high priest’s “question” should, in fact, be taken as an unwitting statement owing to the presence of λέγω in the introductory formula: the high priest asked *and said*; Swanson adds that the word order of the sentence is not inverted, which we might have expected.<sup>71</sup> However, the collocation of ἐπερωτάω and λέγω is not uncommon in Mark’s Gospel in contexts that are exclusively interrogative,<sup>72</sup> and thus should not be taken as indicating anything out of the ordinary—even within the context of the rhetoric of inference. Even if we allow for suggestive word order, there is still the matter of how the line will be performed. One cannot skillfully read a line as *both* a question *and* a testimony; a choice must be made in performance (see further below). Whatever the possibilities in a silent-reading, literary model, a performance setting would not allow anything other than an interrogative force for at least three reasons.

First, as mentioned above, the oral/aural context requires the lector either to perform the line as a question or statement—the demands of appropriate voice inflection require a choice to be made. On this score, the immediate context is by no means neutral: the metalinguistic commentary from the narrator makes clear that the line is interrogative, not indicative.<sup>73</sup> The narrator explicitly states that the high priest *asks* a question (ἐπερωτάω) before narrating the utterance. Second, while the syntax and word order of the “question” are identical to testimonies submitted by the heavenly voice (1:11; 9:7), as well as those from the unclean spirit (3:13) and Peter (8:29), this does not draw a testimony from the high priest. However, the parallel structure in the question would activate the previous testimonies in 1:11, 3:11, and 8:29 for sympathetic listeners.<sup>74</sup> While this connection would result in a deepening reflection on

69 Donahue, S.J., *Are You the Christ?*, 88. See Mark 1:11; 3:11; 8:29. Cf. 15:2.

70 Marcus, *Mark* 8–16, 1016.

71 Richard W. Swanson, “‘This Is My . . .’: Toward a Thick Performance of the Gospel of Mark,” in *From Text to Performance: Narrative and Performance Criticisms in Dialogue and Debate*, ed. Kelly R. Iverson (Eugene, Ore.: Cascade, 2014), 204.

72 Cf. Mark 8:27; 8:29; 9:11; 12:18; 14:60.

73 On metalinguistic commentary in speech act theory, see David R. Olson, *The World on Paper: The Conceptual and Cognitive Implications of Writing and Reading* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 91–114.

74 Cf. Mark 1:11 (σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱὸς μου ὁ ἀγαπητός); 3:11 (σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ); 8:29 (σὺ εἶ ὁ χριστός); 9:7 (οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς μου ὁ ἀγαπητός). So also Donahue, S.J., *Are You the Christ?*, 88.



the characterization of Mark's Jesus within the context of previous testimony, it goes too far to suggest that the high priest's question would be also treated as a statement. Third, the response of the Markan Jesus in 14:62 answers the high priest's question affirmatively with ἐγώ εἰμι,<sup>75</sup> which maintains the interrogative nature of the exchange, offering no indication whatsoever that the Markan Jesus interprets the question as a statement. Marcus has taken σὺ εἶπας ὅτι ἐγώ εἰμι as the wording of Mark 14:62 over the shorter, ἐγώ εἰμι.<sup>76</sup> If Marcus were correct, then the potential for double meaning in the high priest's question would be more striking since Jesus would be pointing out for the audience that the high priest ironically confessed that he is the Christ: "you said that I am!" (14:61). However, this is not the most likely scenario.<sup>77</sup> While it is not impossible that some listeners may hear the question as an ironic testimony, the dialogue moves so quickly that we are on solid ground concluding that the exchange would be understood as a question (from the high priest) and an answer (from the Markan Jesus).

While the high priest's question is purely interrogative, this by no means mitigates the rhetorical power of the formulation of the question itself, which nevertheless activates the matrix of *testimonia* concerning the characterization of Mark's Jesus in strongly Davidic terms. Indeed, the first four words of the high priest's *question* are a verbatim allusion to the Peter's testimony: σὺ εἶ ὁ χριστός. Moreover, the high priest's question builds anticipation among those in the audience familiar with the Gospel as they anticipate the open revelation of Mark's Jesus as "son," which had been silenced so often in the foregoing narrative.<sup>78</sup> As the scene moves from question to testimony, from interrogation to testimony, audience members will not be disappointed.

### *Testimony before the High Priest (Mark 14:62)*

In his response to the high priest's question, "You are the Christ?," the Markan Jesus uses *emphasis* when he confirms the applicability of the title with the terse and loaded phrase, "I am" (ἐγώ εἰμι). On the surface, the Markan Jesus is answering the high priest's question in the affirmative, and this is no small

75 On which, see below.

76 Marcus, *Mark* 8–16, 1005–06.

77 See further below. In Origen (*Commentary on John* 19.20.28) the text includes σὺ εἶπας ὅτι before ἐγώ εἰμι. This reading is supported by a few other MSS, dating from the 9th to the 15th centuries, (Θ<sup>A3</sup> 565 700. 2542<sup>s</sup>). However, it makes the most sense for a scribe to have harmonized 14:62 with Matt 26:64 (σὺ εἶπας) and Luke 22:70 (ὁμεις λέγετε ὅτι ἐγώ εἰμι), especially in light of Mark 15:2 (σὺ λέγεις).

78 Cf. Mark 1:43; 3:12; 5:43; 7:36; 8:30; 9:9.

datum. Not only does this affirmation serve as a reminder for audience members of the Davidic aspects of *kyriotic* sonship, but also, by affirming the high priest's interrogative accusation, the Markan Jesus openly reveals himself as God's son for the first time in the narrative. By doing so, however, he also seals his fate inasmuch as he is aware that the scribes are trying to trap him and a charge of blasphemy awaits (cf. 14:63–64).<sup>79</sup> For perceptive audience members, the accusation of blasphemy will likely activate the scene in Capernaum where the Markan Jesus was similarly accused (2:1–12; cf. 14:63–64). However, as in Capernaum, the deep irony is that, in condemning the Markan Jesus to death for blasphemy,<sup>80</sup> the Sanhedrin itself has become blasphemers since they have failed to recognize who stands before them.<sup>81</sup>

Yet, the words selected for the Markan Jesus in this context reveal more than his Davidic sonship, they also activate the *synkristic* assimilation to Yahweh inasmuch as ἐγὼ εἰμι is evocative of the divine name in Jewish cultural memory. If Jesus's response activates Mark 6:50, where *emphasis* tapped into scripts derived from the LXX in which ἐγὼ εἰμι was used to translate Yahweh's self-revelation in Exod 3:14, the impression would be even stronger.<sup>82</sup> Beginning in the prologue, audience members have been primed to think of Mark's Jesus in terms reserved for Yahweh. For those listeners who have followed the characterization thus far, the words ἐγὼ εἰμι simultaneously affirm the narrative's (and their own) view of Mark's Jesus as a royal Davidic messiah (14:61), but also their view that Mark's Jesus has been assimilated to Yahweh. This is *kyriotic* sonship in a nutshell—the testimonial climax to which the more latent cues to this characterization have been building since the narrative began.<sup>83</sup>

79 Heil, *Mark*, 314.

80 The exact nature of the blasphemy charge—viewed in light of various aspects of Jewish literature, law, and thought—has been the subject of much scholarly debate: Adela Yarbro Collins, "The Charge of Blasphemy in Mark 14.64," *JSNT* 26 (2004): 379–401; Darrell L. Bock, *Blasphemy and Exaltation in Judaism and the Final Examination of Jesus: A Philological-Historical Study of the Key Jewish Themes Impacting Mark 14:61–64*, WUNT 2/106 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998). However, aside from recourse to external scripts, the narrative itself has clarified that blasphemy amounts to the usurpation of God's prerogatives as one's own (cf. 2:7) or failure to recognize the legitimacy of God's work (cf. 3:28–29). In 14:60–64, the Markan Jesus is accused of the former, but his accusers are guilty of the latter.

81 Marcus, *Mark 8–16*, 1017; Fowler, *Reader*, 119. Cf. Peter G. Bolt, *Jesus' Defeat of Death: Persuading Mark's Early Readers*, SNTSMS 125 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 256.

82 See Chapter Four above.

83 Though they conceive of Mark's portrait of Jesus differently, see also Moloney, *Mark*, 305; Dieter Lüthmann, *Das Markusevangelium*, HNT 3 (Tübingen: Mohr, 1987), 249–50; Senior, *Passion*, 94–99.

To be sure, many, perhaps most, scholars have been hesitant to acknowledge more than a positive response to the high priest's question in 14:62.<sup>84</sup> For example, Yarbro Collins draws attention to Mark 13:6, in which she suggests that ἐγώ εἰμι does not evoke the divine name.<sup>85</sup> Yet this judgment overestimates the importance of 13:6 and underestimates the role of the *synkristic* assimilation to God, both in the immediate context and in the Gospel as a whole. For the most part, the possibility is dismissed at the outset, often without comment, which is unfortunate given the prevalence and power of the rhetoric of inference.<sup>86</sup> Thus, despite both arguments and assumptions to the contrary, through one clever turn of a phrase the narrator is able to affirm the entirety of the *kyriotic* sonship of Mark's Jesus.

This portrait is carried forward by the Markan Jesus's followup in 14:62b. Continuing his loaded affirmation of the high priest's question, the Markan Jesus joins together Ps 109:1 LXX and Dan 7:13 LXX as a way of pointing to his future vindication: καὶ ὁψεσθε τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐκ δεξιῶν καθήμενον τῆς δυνάμεως καὶ ἐρχόμενον μετὰ τῶν νεφελῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ (14:62b). By uniting Ps 109:1 and Dan 7:13, the *synkristic* assimilations to Yahweh and David probably join in much the same way as in 12:35–37. Indeed, Mark 12:35–37 will be triggered for audience members regardless of whether they are able to piece together the source of the allusive language, because it is the only other place language from Ps 109:1 LXX is used in the Markan narrative.

However, it is not immediately clear *when* or *how* the members of the Sanhedrin will “see” the Markan Jesus enthroned at God's right hand. Yet there is clearly an eschatological element of exaltation and vindication ushered in by the Markan Jesus's reference to the Danielic Son of Humanity (Dan 7:13 LXX; cf. Mark 13:26–27).<sup>87</sup> One possibility, as Yarbro Collins has argued, is that this coming refers to the future gathering of the elect, in whose eyes the Markan Jesus will be vindicated.<sup>88</sup> Relatedly, it could simply refer broadly to the Parousia.<sup>89</sup> On the other hand, as Juel has noted, this response from the Markan Jesus may provide a veiled reference to the resurrection.<sup>90</sup> Indeed,

84 Among the many, see recently, Lars Hartman, *Mark for the Nations: A Text- and Reader-Oriented Commentary* (Eugene, Ore.: Pickwick, 2010), 597; Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 704; Moloney, *Mark*, 304; Morna D. Hooker, *The Gospel According to Saint Mark*, BNTC 2 (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1991), 360–61; Brown, *Death*, 488–89.

85 Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 704. Alternatively, ἐγώ εἰμι may *falsely* evoke the divine name in 13:6, since it is not evoked by the Markan Jesus (cf. 13:20–21).

86 Cf. Demetrius, *Eloc.* 243. See further Chapter Two above.

87 So also Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 704–05.

88 Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 705.

89 Beavis, *Mark*, 221.

90 Juel, *Messiah and Temple*, 94–95.

some in the audience may feel the same way, and van Iersel's objection to this conclusion that "καθήμενος indicates a state and not an event" seems unnecessarily pedantic.<sup>91</sup>

While the pace of performance does not allow much time for reflection, the language of royal enthronement—allusive of Ps 109:1 LXX<sup>92</sup>—may subsequently prime or activate the hints at Jesus's death as enthronement from Mark 12:35–37. There, as we saw above in Chapter Five, the enthronement prefigured in the inspired testimony of David was, in fact, the crucifixion and death of the Markan Jesus (cf. 10:35–40).<sup>93</sup> Van Iersel has objected that there is no evidence in Mark for an association between the cross and a throne,<sup>94</sup> but the discussion of 12:35–37 in Chapter Five indicated otherwise. Furthermore, the fact that the Roman government tended to understand crucifixion as a parodic event, in which the condemned was "exalted" on a cross, offers fertile soil for casting the Markan crucifixion as such.<sup>95</sup> As we shall see, this is a vital piece of the puzzle concerning how David's Lord can also be David's son; the key lies in his ironic exaltation as the Markan king (cf. 12:35–37).

Moreover, the hints to enthronement triggered in 14:62 tease out crucial elements of *kyriotic* sonship: suffering and death. Betrayed by Judas, abandoned by his disciples, and put on trial by the leaders of the people, the Markan Jesus now begins his ascendancy to the throne of the cross. Just as he prophesied in 10:33–34, he has been "handed over to the chief priests and the scribes," who have condemned him to death. The scene closes as the prophecy continues to come to pass as he is spit upon and beaten (14:65) before they "hand him over to the Gentiles" (cf. 15:1).<sup>96</sup> For some, this abuse may activate scripts associated with righteous suffering from Jewish tradition in which a righteous person is humiliated at the hands of wicked people (cf. Isa 50:6 LXX).<sup>97</sup> That both passages join πρόσωπον together with ἐμπτύω/ἐμπτυσμα and ῥάπισμα argues

91 van Iersel, *Mark*, 451 n. 88.

92 So also Frank J. Matera, *The Kingship of Jesus: Composition and Theology in Mark 15*, SBLDS 66 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1982), 111–13.

93 See Chapter Five above. Similarly, Norman Perrin, "The High Priest's Question and Jesus' Answer (Mark 14:61–62)," in *The Passion in Mark: Studies on Mark 14–16*, ed. Werner H. Kelber (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976), 80–95 (esp. 92–94).

94 See van Iersel, *Mark*, 449 n. 83.

95 See Joel Marcus, "Crucifixion as Parodic Exaltation," *JBL* 125 (2006): 73–87.

96 The irony that has soaked this scene is further emphasized by what follows as the audience watches while the powers of the one mocked as a "prophet" (14:65) are vindicated in Peter's three denials (14:66–72; cf. 14:26–31).

97 τὸν νῶτόν μου δέδωκα εἰς μάστιγας, τὰς δὲ σιαγόνας μου εἰς ῥαπίσματα, τὸ δὲ πρόσωπόν μου οὐκ ἀπέστρεψα ἀπὸ αἰσχύνῃς ἐμπτυσμάτων. See further below on Mark 15:19.

strongly for an activation of related Isaianic scripts for those listeners well acquainted with scripts for righteous suffering ubiquitous in Jewish literature.<sup>98</sup>

In sum, the response of the Markan Jesus furthers the *synkristic* assimilation of Jesus to David and God, both of which began in the prologue.<sup>99</sup> Mark 14:55–58 offers testimony that Mark's Jesus is a royal Davidic messiah, whose death and resurrection would mean the symbolic destruction of the temple (cf. 15:38) and the metaphorical rebuilding of the temple of his body (cf. 16:6–7).<sup>100</sup> For some in the audience there were even suggestions of continuing allusive language for Yahweh embedded in the suggestion that the Markan Jesus himself would rebuild the temple. This portrait of Mark's Jesus was supported by the suggestive syntactical structure of the high priest's question in 14:61 and confirmed by the testimony of the Markan Jesus himself in 14:62. The exchange in 14:61–62 formed something of a précis of *kyriotic* sonship in which the *synkristic* assimilations to Yahweh and David were joined in a way that also looked forward to a time of suffering and exaltation. This portrait was supported by the overall depiction of Mark's Jesus in a manner that resembled the depiction of an insulted and abused suffering righteous one.

There is suggestive evidence that those in the audience acquainted with Jewish cultural memory would infer that Mark's Jesus is being dramatically cast as a righteous sufferer in the midst of being hailed as a Davidic and *kyriotic* king. This will be the case even for those audience members who do not hear any allusive language in the mistreatment of Jesus, since he enters the passion as the *kyriotic* Son, and this characterization is built not upon any one particular episode, but on the totality of the narrative portrait.

### **Ironic Testimony at the Roman Trial (Mark 15:1–20a)**

We now turn to the testimony insinuated from the exchange with Pilate, along with Jesus's ironic mistreatment at the hands of the Roman soldiers.

98 My contention here is not that any specific text from Isaiah will be activated, but rather the key words (πρόσωπον together with ἐμπτύω/ἐμπτυσμα and ῥάπισμα) will call to mind the schemas and scripts associated with righteous suffering. Similarly Donahue, S.J., *Are You the Christ?*, 98; Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 707. The term ῥάπισμα only shows up in the NT outside of Mark 14:65 in John 18:22; 19:3. In the LXX, it only occurs in Isa 50:6. The notion that a righteous sufferer may be unjustly mistreated is also found among the Davidic psalms of individual lament. For example, Pss 41 and 42 LXX depict righteous suffering in ways that combine physical mistreatment with verbal mistreatment in a manner similar to Mark 14:65, and perhaps also 15:16. So also Ahearne-Kroll, *Jesus' Davidic Suffering*, 193–96.

99 See Chapter Three above.

100 See further below.

*Testimony from the Exchange with Pilate (Mark 15:1–15)*

Beaten, bruised, and abandoned, the Markan Jesus is now handed over to Pilate, who has questions of his own. Like the high priest's wording, Pilate's query will be cast in *prosopopoetic* language that triggers previous *testimonia*. Using syntax, word order, and titles that activate the earlier testimonies presented to the audience,<sup>101</sup> Pilate asks the Markan Jesus, σὺ εἶ ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων; (15:2). Once more, at the story level, Pilate's question is purely interrogative. He wants to know whether or not the Markan Jesus is claiming to be the royal leader of the Judeans.

The title “King of the Jews” is unique to the passion, and, for that reason there has been some debate as to its suitability for Jesus in Mark. For example, Edwin Broadhead points to the fact that everyone explicitly acknowledged as “king” in Mark's Gospel practiced violence.<sup>102</sup> However, this observation overlooks the fact that (1) the Markan Jesus answers Pilate's question to kingship in the affirmative (albeit cryptically) (15:2; see below), and (2) the way other characters treat the Markan Jesus is suggestive of (ironic) kingship.<sup>103</sup> In other words, Broadhead's presentation does not do justice to the rhetorical contours of the passion presentation of the kingship of Mark's Jesus.<sup>104</sup> Similarly, Malbon has objected that no character, not least the narrator, has applied the title to Jesus until now, when it is placed on the lips of Pilate, who is a “nonreliable character.”<sup>105</sup> However, and this applies equally to Broadhead, even the words of characters are the craft of the author; and in this case, they match the royal depiction of the Markan Jesus that has spanned the entirety of the narrative. Moreover, the title “King of the Jews” receives enough attention in the passion that it is not so easily dismissed. As we will see below, this language is part of a larger emphasis on the kingship of Mark's Jesus reflected in the Roman soldier's ironic mockery and even the placard at the crucifixion. Pilate may be an antagonist in the narrative, but on this score his remarks are ultimately sure-footed, even if his intentions are less than sincere.

101 Cf. Mark 1:11 (σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱὸς μου ὁ ἀγαπητός); 3:11 (σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ); 8:29 (σὺ εἶ ὁ χριστός); 9:7 (οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς μου ὁ ἀγαπητός).

102 Edwin K. Broadhead, *Naming Jesus: Titular Christology in the Gospel of Mark*, JSNTSup 175 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999), 75–80.

103 It also overlooks the violence the Markan Jesus promises to the temple and those associated with it (cf. Mark 13).

104 See further below on Mark 15:26.

105 Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, *Mark's Jesus: Characterization as Narrative Christology* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2009), 118–19.

As with the high priest, Pilate uses Roman categories that audiences would expect from a *Roman* prefect interrogating a potential Jewish political opponent of the emperor.<sup>106</sup> Therefore, when he asks if the Markan Jesus is the “King of the Jews,” his question is not substantively different than the high priest’s *from the perspective of those in the audience*.<sup>107</sup> In this way, the question explicitly brings the characterization of Mark’s Jesus before the audience once again. For sympathetic audience members, the answer has been clear from the incipit of the prologue (cf. 1:1): Mark’s Jesus is certainly King, even an ideal Davidic king, but, as the *kyriotic* Son, he is so much more.

The Markan Jesus’s response to Pilate—σὺ λέγεις—seems cryptic and has been variously understood.<sup>108</sup> For example, William Campbell contends that the Markan Jesus is equivocating, but in a way that shows a willingness to continue the dialogue.<sup>109</sup> Yarbrow Collins is probably closer to the mark—at least at the story level—when she argues that the Markan Jesus’s words are “neither a denial nor an affirmation,” but rather intentionally ambiguous or evasive.<sup>110</sup> However, while Pilate understands the response thusly, at least some in the audience may hear Jesus cleverly, though tacitly, affirming the testimony given by Pilate: “You are saying it.”<sup>111</sup>

For sympathetic audience members, who view the Markan Jesus as king, the response leverages ambiguity to his favor.<sup>112</sup> He couches his response in *emphasis*, which, in this case, leaves some doubt as to what exactly he means. This degree of ambiguity allows those who know better (the audience) to hear an affirmation while veiling the response from his hostile opponent (Pilate). The response is thus not, in Hooker’s words, “non-committal,”<sup>113</sup> but rather shrewd and polysemous, allowing for a variety of meanings that capitalize on

106 On *prosopopoeia*, see, e.g., Theon, *Prog.* 115–118. Cf. Ps-Hermogenes, *Prog.* 20–21.

107 Similarly, Matera, *Kingship*, 13–14, cf. 67–91; Juel, *Messiah and Temple*, 105; Donahue, S.J., *Are You the Christ?*, 88–89.

108 For a detailed discussion of the myriad of scholarly understandings of the Markan Jesus’s response, see David R. Catchpole, “The Answer of Jesus to Caiaphas (Matt. Xxvi. 64),” *NTS* 17 (1971): 213–26.

109 William S. Campbell, “Engagement, Disengagement and Obstruction: Jesus’ Defense Strategies in Mark’s Trial and Execution Scenes (14:53–64; 15:1–39),” *JSNT* 26 (2004): 289.

110 Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 713.

111 So also Marcus (*Mark* 8–16, 1033), who correctly writes, “Jesus himself has no need to affirm his kingship, because Pilate has already done so for him.” Pilate, however, does not understand: ὁ δὲ Πιλάτος πάλιν ἐπηρώτα αὐτόν λέγων· οὐκ ἀποκρίνη οὐδέν; ἴδε πόσα σου κατηγοροῦσιν (15:4).

112 Similarly, Fowler, *Reader*, 159.

113 See Hooker, *Mark*, 367.



the opportunities provided by *emphasis*. Indeed, as discussed in Chapter Two above, *emphasis* was prescribed for situations just like this, where someone wanted to veil his or her response—especially from a hostile opponent—in order to create doubt about its meaning through elusive language.<sup>114</sup> The rhetorical skill demonstrated in the narrative thus far suggests that the Markan Jesus is pointing out the open nature of Pilate's words for the benefit of the audience.

The kingship of Mark's Jesus is also confirmed by the repetition of the title "the King of the Jews" throughout his interrogation (15:9; 15:12). It is even the official charge—or better, testimony—inscribed above Jesus as he hangs on the cross (15:26; cf. 15:2, 18, 32) (see below). Finally, that Pilate demonstrates "amazement" (θαυμάζειν τὸν Πιλάτον) would reasonably activate for sympathetic audience members other contexts in which the characterization of Mark's Jesus was revealed through testimony or through allusive language (cf. 1:27; 2:12; 5:19–20; 6:50–51).<sup>115</sup> The result is an incorporation of the title "King of the Jews" (and its cognates) into the overall matrix of *kyriotic* sonship. The narrative's affirmation of Mark's Jesus—David's Lord—as "King," even as he is subject to Jewish and Roman authorities, creates an ironic portrait of a Davidic king. This is a king, whose power manifest in weakness and apparent destruction would likely mollify revolutionary concerns latent in Pilate's question, common in first-century Jewish hope (cf. 11:9–10), and popular in the socio-political climate around 70 CE.

In short, the testimony that the Markan Jesus is "the King of the Jews" activates the *synkristic* relationship with David without picking up its revolutionary connotations. Such a shrewd adoption of Davidic scripts should not be surprising given the clash between Jewish revolutionaries and Rome in the late first century and early second century. We have already seen that the narrative avoids associated revolutionary connotations while upholding the royal aspects that lay at the core of Davidic messianism (cf. 8:29–12:37).<sup>116</sup> Since these episodes would be triggered readily by the exchange with Pilate, due to their focus on Jesus as a Davidic figure, these same royal aspects are likely

114 See Quintilian, *Inst.* 9.2.67–75.

115 On the inclusion of Pilate with other characters who stand in amazement of the Markan Jesus, see Timothy Dwyer, *The Motif of Wonder in the Gospel of Mark*, JSNTSup 128 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996), 180.

116 See discussions in Chapters Four and Five above on Peter's testimony and subsequent misunderstanding (8:29–33), the entry into Jerusalem (11:1–11), and the question about the Son of David (12:35–37).

activated for attentive audience members, who briefly reflect upon the nature of the kingship of Mark's Jesus.

While he meant it as a question, the Markan Jesus's response—σὺ λέγεις—co-opts the line as a testimony for audience members. Pilate's question, "You are the king of the Jews?" is met with the Markan Jesus's reply, "*You* are saying it." This kingship is graphically depicted in the frailty of the beaten and bloody Judean, set on the path to his execution, and highlighted by the doubly ironic testimony of the Roman soldiers.

*Ironic Testimony in the Mockery of the Roman Soldiers*  
(Mark 15:16–20a)

The narrative continues as the "entire cohort" (ὅλην τὴν σπεῖραν) leads the Markan Jesus into the courtyard at Pilate's headquarters (15:16), clothes him in a purple robe, and makes a crown of thorns for his head (15:16–17a). They salute him derisively: "Hail, King of the Jews!" (15:17b–18). They beat him with a reed (κάλαμος), his mock scepter,<sup>117</sup> and spit on him before repeatedly prostrating themselves (προσεκύουν) before their mock-king (15:19). Afterward, the soldiers strip him of the purple robe, which momentarily symbolized his kingship, re-dress him in his own tattered clothes, and lead him out to the "throne" upon which he will be exalted parodically in crucifixion (15:20).<sup>118</sup>

The detail in this scene is striking, with much of the action (vv. 16–17) being cast in historical presents and iterative imperfects (v. 19), adding tones of reality and vividness all the more striking in performance. This heightened level of detail would transport the audience into the midst of the action itself where they could experience the mockery of the Markan Jesus to greater emotional effect.<sup>119</sup> As Kristen Marie Hartvigsen has pointed out—in step with ancient rhetors like Theon, Quintilian, and the author of *Rhetorica ad Herennium* before her—this vivid detail enables the audience to become

<sup>117</sup> Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 727.

<sup>118</sup> Cf. Marcus, "Crucifixion," 73–87. See further below on Mark 15:25–28 for discussion of the cross as a throne in Mark's conception of the kingship of Jesus.

<sup>119</sup> In *ekphrasis* or *demonstratio*, an event is described with such vivid detail that the scene seems to be enacted before the eyes of those in the audience. See, e.g., Theon, *Prog.* 118–120; Ps-Hermogenes, *Prog.* 22–23; Rhet. Her. 2.30.49; 4.39.51; 4.54.68; Quintilian, *Inst.* 4.2.63–64; 6.2.32; 8.3.61; 9.2.40. Cf. Ruth Webb, *Ekphrasis, Imagination and Persuasion in Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Practice* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009), esp. 131–66. On the repeated mockery of Jesus in the Markan passion and its rhetorical force of prompting audience identification, see Kelly R. Iverson, "A Centurion's 'Confession': A Performance-Critical Analysis of Mark 15:39," *JBL* 130 (2011): 342–450.

invisible witnesses of the events, which no disciple in the story world sees.<sup>120</sup> The result is that audience members follow the Markan Jesus all the way to his crucifixion, far beyond his disciples who have failed to keep their word (cf. 14:31).<sup>121</sup> This level of audience participation also engenders both the emotional response of pity and facilitates the activation of a variety of internal and external schemas and scripts, which help audience members make sense of the scene.<sup>122</sup>

The Markan Jesus is explicitly (though mockingly) hailed as “King of the Jews” (15:18), and the soldiers dress him in a purple robe, a color often associated with royalty,<sup>123</sup> especially in the form of deputies or local leaders,<sup>124</sup> who were considered friends of the king;<sup>125</sup> the same could be said of a crown.<sup>126</sup> This scene is unmistakably royal, even if ironically so, for those in the audience.<sup>127</sup> But what threads from Jewish cultural memory might the scene prime or activate?

One possibility, as both Yarbrow Collins<sup>128</sup> and Marcus<sup>129</sup> have argued, is that the soldiers hitting the Markan Jesus on the head with a reed (κάλαμος) may activate a faint allusion to Micah 4:14 LXX where Israel herself is struck on the cheek with a rod (ῥάβδος).<sup>130</sup> While the possibility should not be ruled out and the terms for “reed” or “stick” are content addressable, the temporal flow of the performance weakens the chances that those in the audience would have the time to catch such an obscure reference.

Audience members may also interpret the mockery of the Markan Jesus along the lines of the matrix of Jewish scripts derived from notions of the Isaianic servant.<sup>131</sup> We have already found reason to suspect these scripts would be activated during the Markan Jesus’s trial before the Sanhedrin (14:65), and the depiction of Jesus as beaten and spit upon by Roman soldiers

120 Hartvigsen, *Prepare*, 499. See also “Narrative Persuasion in Cognitive Perspective” in Chapter Two above.

121 Similarly, see below on audience inclusion in Mark 16:1–8.

122 On the arousal of pity as a function of *ekphrastic* speech, see Rhet. Her. 4.39.51.

123 E.g., Judg 8:26; Esth 8:15. Cf. Marcus, *Mark* 8–16, 1039.

124 Hartvigsen, *Prepare*, 498. Cf. Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 726.

125 E.g., 1 Macc 10:20; 10:62; 10:64; 11:58; 14:43–44 LXX; cf. Dan 5:7; 5:16; 5:29 LXX.

126 E.g., 1 Macc 8:14 (where the crown is paired with a purple robe) LXX.

127 Similarly, Hartvigsen, *Prepare*, 497–99.

128 Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 727.

129 Marcus, *Mark* 8–16, 1048.

130 The MT calls the one whose cheek is struck, “the judge of Israel” (perhaps the king of Judah?). See further Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 727.

131 Donahue and Harrington, *Mark*, 439.

(15:16–20) may work in a similar fashion (cf., e.g., Isa 42:3; 50:6). Moreover, as we have seen, listeners have been primed since Peter's testimony (and its subsequent correction) to think of Mark's Jesus as a Davidic king who will be mistreated, mocked, and ultimately killed.<sup>132</sup> The abuse of the Markan Jesus at the hands of the Sanhedrin and Pilate will surely have primed these same traditions and expectations from within the narrative (cf. 8:28–31; 9:7–13; 10:33–34).<sup>133</sup> The union of these scripts associated with righteous suffering from Jewish cultural memory together with the thoroughgoing notion of Mark's Jesus as a Davidic messiah, ensures that, whatever else he is, David's Lord emerges from the beating and mistreatment in 15:16–20 as a Davidic king.<sup>134</sup>

Likewise, audience members familiar with the common forms of derision heaped on victims of the Roman Empire may think of the common and parodic treatment of enemies of the state, in which Roman soldiers treated them ironically, mocking the royal station to which they aspired.<sup>135</sup> This mockery usually took on the form of a "coronation" that was, to some degree, modeled after the coronation of Alexander the Great. This typically included an enthronement, investment with a purple robe and diadem, and the genuflection of those in attendance.<sup>136</sup> Cultural memory of such coronations was maintained at the popular level through theatrical farces, in which, as Plutarch describes, stage actors would mock Alexander's royal garb, including his purple clothing and curiously styled hat.<sup>137</sup>

Philo records a similar farcical, royal mockery, aimed at degrading Agrippa I through the humiliation of a lunatic named, Carabas. Triggered by a local political event in Jerusalem, an angry mob ridiculed King Agrippa I through the parodic enthronement of Carabas. During this parodic exaltation of Agrippa's surrogate, they (1) set Carabas atop the highest point on the public gymnasium, (2) crowned with a makeshift diadem of papyrus, (3) entrusted with a papyrus scepter, and (4) vested with a door mat for a robe (*Flacc.* 36–37). They

132 See on 8:27–33 in Chapter Four above.

133 See above on 14:55–65 and 15:1–15.

134 This portrait of Jesus as a suffering Davidic king or messiah represents and/or seems to reflect a Christian innovation rather than an extant schema from Jewish tradition. In other words, the scripts associated with righteous suffering are joined with Mark's presentation of Jesus as a David messiah to yield a Christian schema for Jesus as a suffering messiah.

135 E.g., Livy *Epit.* 10.7.9; 30.15.11; Dio Cass. 62.4.3–6.2; 62.20.2–6; 64.20 Dion. Hal. 5.47.2–3; Suet. *Tib.* 17; *Ner.* 25; Plut. *Aem.* 34.4; App. *Pun.* 66; Josephus *B.J.* 7.5.4 §§123–157.

136 Quintus Curtius, *History of Alexander the Great* 6.6.2–4; Ps-Callisthenes, *Romance of Alexander the Great* 95. Cf. Marcus, *Mark* 8–16, 1047.

137 *Life of Demetrius* 41.3–4; cf. Marcus, *Mark* 8–16, 1047.

then paraded Carabas around as an imitation of Agrippa, even absurdly consulting Carabas about the affairs of the state (*Flacc.* 38–39).<sup>138</sup> To be sure, the Carabas incident is quite different from the scene in Mark 15:16–20a. Carabas was the surrogate for the ridicule heaped upon Agrippa I rather than its ultimate target. However, it is nevertheless reflective of the symbolic, ironic mockery, couched in feigned “reverence,” sometimes directed toward leadership figures in the first century.

Thus, we are on solid ground in concluding that, when confronted with the treatment of the Markan Jesus in Mark 15:16–20a, audience members would easily and predictably infer that the Markan Jesus was being treated as a claimant to royalty: He claimed to be a king and now the Roman soldiers were treating him as such. After all, the mocking salutation, “Hail, King of the Jews!” is a parody of the Roman greeting for the Emperor, *Ave Caesar*.<sup>139</sup> Those who hear the episode thusly may infer that it is cast as “a burlesque of a Roman triumphal procession.”<sup>140</sup> If this script is activated, the Markan Jesus will be presented as a humiliating excuse for a king from the Roman imperial perspective.

138 See further Marcus, *Mark* 8–16, 1047.

139 See Gnlika, *Markus*, 2.3–8. Cf. Moloney, *Mark*, 316.

140 Beavis, *Mark*, 227. Cf. Sharyn E. Dowd, *Reading Mark: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Second Gospel*, Reading the New Testament (Macon, GA.: Smyth & Helwys, 2000), 158. However, I insist on the caveat that audience members would *experience* the scene as a burlesque of a Roman triumph, rather than it necessarily being composed as such. Many have argued that the narrative itself, in some fashion, intentionally mimics the Roman triumph, whether through literary allusions or, more recently, by co-opting its rituals. See Allan T. Georgia, “Translating the Triumph: Reading Mark’s Crucifixion Narrative against a Roman Ritual of Power,” *JSNT* 36 (2013): 17–38, who builds on the work of Thomas E. Schmidt, “Mark 15:16–32: The Crucifixion Narrative and the Roman Triumphal Procession,” *NTS* 41 (1995): 1–18. Schmidt builds off of the seminal work of H. S. Versnel, *Triumphus: An Inquiry into the Origin, Development and Meaning of the Roman Triumph* (Leiden: Brill, 1970). In turn, Adam Winn, *The Purpose of Mark’s Gospel: An Early Christian Response to Roman Imperial Propaganda*, WUNT 2/245 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 129–32 and Brian J. Incigneri, *The Gospel to the Romans: The Setting and Rhetoric of Mark’s Gospel*, B1S 65 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 167–68 follow Schmidt. The most important contribution of these studies comes from Thomas Schmidt, who argued that the entirety of Mark 15:16–39 intentionally draws on traditions associated with the Roman triumph in order to present the passion in “parabolic form.” The result is that through his humiliation, the Markan Jesus is cast as “the true Son of God, the true Lord who is manifested *triumphant* at the moment of his sacrifice” (18). Schmidt amasses an impressive number of texts that represent Roman cultural memory, which seem to parallel the key events that span Mark 15:16–39: the gathering of the whole guard (15:16), the ceremonial dress (15:17); the mockery of the soldiers (15:18–19), the procession (15:20b), the requisition of Simon to carry the cross (15:21), the specification of the place of crucifixion

If this Roman script were to lie dormant, however, audience members would still understand what is happening since the narrative makes the ironic nature of the mockery unmistakable through the narrator's use of metalinguistic commentary to clue the audience in on the ironic, royal context.<sup>141</sup> For

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with the translation of the name (15:22), offering and refusal of myrrhed wine right before crucifixion (15:23), specification of the hour of crucifixion (15:25), the placard (15:26), the specification of the number and placement of those crucified with Jesus (15:27). However, his project runs aground in his argument that Mark's passion intentionally mimics the Roman triumph, since there is a great deal of unevenness in the strength of the parallels he adduces (they are more striking at the beginning). Similar critiques come from Georgia, "Translating," 19 and Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 725, 737. Yarbrow Collins has harshly critiqued Schmidt, whose theses she finds "far-fetched" (725) and "highly unlikely" (737). Others have sought to find a connection between the Roman triumph and Mark 15:16–39 through a different path.

Most recently, using Pierre Bourdieu's theory of the "logic of practice," Georgia has sought to apply the Roman triumph to Mark 15:16–39 via its ritualistic logic. The result is the transformation of "Jesus' status as victim into an assertion of his authority, so that Jesus' execution by Roman agents emerges as a ritualized assertion of Jesus' Davidic kingship" (17). In this way, "Mark emerges as a cultural *bricoleur* who co-opts Roman spectacle in order to naturalize Rome's dominant language, symbols and practices, thereby translating them to the purposes of gospel" (17). However Georgia places too much weight on the *παρουσία* scene in *Chaereas and Callirhoe* 8.6 since he is arguing for the specific composition of Mark 15:16–39 in terms reminiscent of the Roman triumph rituals ("Translating," 26–29). Nevertheless, Georgia has succeeded in articulating a striking account of the similar ritualistic imagery between the Roman triumph and Mark 15:16–36, thereby indirectly proposing a more likely scenario for the priming of the Roman triumph in the minds of some in the audience.

While this study is not interested in arguments concerning the compositional intent behind Mark 15:16–39, both Schmidt and Georgia have nevertheless provided valuable evidence for a more obvious and less contentious conclusion: those in the audience familiar with the rituals surrounding the Roman triumph would be likely to interpret the suffering of the Markan Jesus in Mark 15:16–39 in such terms; that is, they would understand the mockery of the soldiers as drawing attention to what (in the Roman view) was the illegitimacy of the claim to kingship for the Markan Jesus. However, sympathetic audience members may also know that the scene is doubly ironic: the *ironic* treatment of the Markan Jesus in royal terms, in a manner that brought such pain, torture, and humiliation, is itself ironic since, as the audience has come to expect, Mark's Jesus is only king inasmuch as he reigns through suffering, death, and resurrection (see further below). On the "logic of practice," see, e.g., Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990).

141 Similarly, Iverson, "A Centurion's 'Confession,'" 334. Metalinguistic commentary is made up of narrative's judgments of its plot, characters, or the actions of those characters, which offer clues to readers/listeners that guide the interpretation of a narrative. On metalinguistic commentary in speech act theory, See further Olson, *World on Paper*, 91–114.

example, the narrator recounts that the soldiers ἤρξαντο ἀσπάζεσθαι αὐτόν (15:18) and τιθέντες τὰ γόνατα προσεκύουν αὐτῷ (15:19), but she or he also makes explicit that these soldiers were mocking him (ἐνέπαιξαν αὐτῷ; 15:20).<sup>142</sup>

In reality, for most in the audience, both sets of Jewish and Roman scripts—of righteous suffering and a Roman parodic procession—would most likely be activated at this late stage in the narrative because the ironic and suffering dimensions of *kyriotic* sonship have been consistently sustained from Peter's testimony and Isaianic scripts lie so close to the surface in Mark's passion. Both scripts may be simultaneously activated because they are not strictly competing, but are rather compatible: a righteous sufferer is put on "display" in the fashion of a Roman parodic procession.

Audience members sympathetic to the narrative to this point will understand that this notion of power in weakness and victory in defeat is antithetical to Roman imperial notions of kingship, power, and authority. But they also ought to view it as fitting precisely with the portrait forecast for Mark's Jesus earlier in the narrative. When Pilate hands him over to the Roman soldiers, his earlier prophecies that this must happen would likely be activated (cf. 9:31; 10:33–34).<sup>143</sup> Since these prophecies are found in contexts that characterize Mark's Jesus as the *kyriotic* Son,<sup>144</sup> this portrait is likewise ushered into the passion at this point, even as it received attention in the earlier episode before the Sanhedrin (14:55–65): David's Lord continues his path toward his appointed ironic exaltation as David's "son" (cf. 10:37–40; 12:35–37).

The rhetoric of this scene co-opts the actions of the Roman soldiers as testimony in support of the Gospel's presentation of Mark's Jesus. The premise of the Roman soldiers is adopted by the narrative—the Markan Jesus must be beaten and mocked—but the conclusion of the Roman soldiers that the Markan Jesus is a pathetic would-be "king" is undercut and reversed by the Markan narrative, which presents the Messianic rule of Jesus as one typified by suffering, mockery, death, and ultimately vindication.<sup>145</sup> The cumulative result is the confirmation of Mark's Jesus as the royal *kyriotic* Son by way of doubly ironic derision, which will either be understood in light of the passion prophecies or scripts associated with righteous suffering.

142 The soldiers are also cast in plainly insincere ways when they use a crown of thorns (15:17) and strike him on the head and spit on him (15:19), eventually stripping off the purple robe and leading him to his crucifixion (15:20).

143 ἐμπαίξουσιν αὐτῷ καὶ ἐμπτύσουσιν αὐτῷ καὶ μαστιγώσουσιν αὐτόν καὶ ἀποκτενοῦσιν (15:15).

144 See further on 8:29–31; 9:2–13 above; cf. 9:31; 10:32–40 in Chapters Four and Five above.

145 Cf. Quintilian, *Inst.* 5.11.43. See further Riggsby, "Appropriation and Reversal," 245–56. See further on "Inference Generation in Ancient Rhetorical Theory" in Chapter Two above.



Audience members have long known that Mark's idea of kingship would entail suffering,<sup>146</sup> but they now watch as it is vividly demonstrated. It is important to note that, while Jesus is divested of his purple robe before the death march to the cross, his crown remains as a symbol that his royal identity cannot be stripped.<sup>147</sup> The mock coronation has become an authentic one; David's Lord prepares to take his rightful place as David's son on the throne of the cross.<sup>148</sup> As Moloney puts it, "For the Markan Christology it is *in the moment of suffering, insult, humiliation, and finally death* that Jesus is king."<sup>149</sup>

### The Crucifixion of the Davidic King (Mark 15:20b–25)

The crucifixion itself is rife with language evocative of righteous suffering. While the *synkristic* relationship with Yahweh is not directly activated in this section, Jesus is already secured as David's Lord at this late stage (cf. 12:37). With the *kyriotic* element of the characterization firmly established, the narrative will now cast David's Lord with language dripping with allusions to righteous suffering from Jewish cultural memory.

As the Markan Jesus is led away to his crucifixion (15:20b), Roman soldiers conscript Simon, a man from Cyrene, to carry the crossbeam for him (15:21). This seemingly unrelated detail emphasizes the ironic frailty of the Markan Jesus, who, only moments earlier, had acknowledged his (Davidic) sonship using the divine name in such a way that called to mind his godlike characterization over the course of the narrative (14:62). This *kyriotic* Jesus cannot even manage his own cross.

Trying to make a case for the Roman triumphal procession, Thomas Schmidt has argued that Simon represents the "official who carries over his shoulder a double-bladed axe, the instrument of the victim's death" in the Roman triumph.<sup>150</sup> However, the scene itself is too terse and the points of contact with cultural scripts too subtle and too sparsely represented for audience members

146 Cf., e.g., 8:31; 9:31; 10:33–34.

147 Many thanks to my mentor, Kelly Iverson, for bringing my attention to this detail during the dissertation phase of my graduate work.

148 Cf. Senior, *Passion*, 113–14; Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, 257; John Painter, *Mark's Gospel: Worlds in Conflict* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 201; van Iersel, *Mark*, 468; Hartvigsen, *Prepare*, 499.

149 Moloney, *Mark*, 317.

150 Schmidt, "Mark 15.16–32," 9. For artwork depicting this feature of Roman triumphs, see Inez Scott Ryberg, *Rites of the State Religion in Roman Art* (Rome: American Academy in Rome, 1955), figs. 54a, 54b, 55, 56, 58, 61a, 64, 65, 69a, 78a, 81b, 81d, 82a, 96b.

to be expected to hear such a reference, especially in a performance. Instead, the nearer “intratextual” script of carrying one’s own cross will be more reliably triggered (cf. 8:34).<sup>151</sup>

The scene evokes this imagery in two ways. First, it portrays in a gruesome manner the sort of identification with Mark’s Jesus that comes with bearing the cross. Second, the scene is fraught with irony in that the one who gave the injunction to carry one’s own cross is now too weak for the task himself. There are even hints that the Markan Jesus needed to be carried to the place of execution (φέρουσιν αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τὸν Γολγοθᾶν τόπον; 15:22).

The language for the crucifixion itself is brief, a style that is consistent with Theon’s injunction to narrate unpleasant events briefly so as not to distress the hearers.<sup>152</sup> However, the repetition (*conduplicatio*) of the phrase, “they crucified him” emphasizes for the audience the gravity of what is happening, leaving a deep impression on the hearers.<sup>153</sup> In the words of Ps-Cicero, the effect is “as if a weapon should pierce the same part of the body over and over again” (Rhet. Her. 4.28.38).<sup>154</sup> This stress on Jesus’s crucifixion activates his own prophecies of his coming death, which have hung over the narrative like a foreboding storm since the story’s turning point.<sup>155</sup>

Once the Markan Jesus is brought to Golgotha, he is offered wine mixed with myrrh, which he refuses (15:23). Marcus has discussed several potential functions of this refusal, which, he maintains, function together:<sup>156</sup> (1) avoidance of the alleviation of pain since this mixture was an analgesic; (2) embrace of the full spectrum of suffering since he is giving his life as a ransom for many (cf. 10:45); (3) eschatological anticipation of the fulfillment of the vow he took to abstain from wine until the coming of the Kingdom of God (14:25); and (4) emphasis on the Markan Jesus’s kingship since “wine is not for kings to drink” (Prov 31:4 LXX). The image of Roman soldiers offering myrrid wine to the crucified Jesus would most reliably activate his earlier prophecy that he will not drink from the fruit of the vine again until he drinks it

151 Similarly, Hartvigsen, *Prepare*, 500; van Iersel, *Mark*, 468.

152 Theon, *Prog.* 80. Cf. *Iliad* 18.20, “Low lies Patroclus” (κεῖται Πάτροκλος), issued as an example by Theon.

153 Cf. σταυρώσωσιν αὐτόν (15:20), σταυροῦσιν αὐτόν (15:24), ἐσταύρωσαν αὐτόν (15:25).

154 Vehementer auditorem commovet eiusdem redintegratio verbi et vulnus maius efficit in contrario causae, quasi aliquod telum saepius perveniat in eandem corporis partem (Rhet. Her. 4.28.38). Cf. Quintilian *Inst.* 9.3.28–29.

155 Cf. Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:33–34.

156 Marcus, *Mark* 8–16, 1049.

anew in the kingdom of God (14:25).<sup>157</sup> Others in the audience may infer that the Markan Jesus is abstaining from any alleviation of his coming suffering.<sup>158</sup> This script would surely be all the more pronounced for those in the audience familiar with the “noble death” tradition.<sup>159</sup> However, in light of the unrelenting performance, it is unlikely that, even those most familiar with the LXX would think of Prov 31:3–4 in the offering of myrrhed wine to the Markan Jesus. The same should be said for the potential of an activation of scripts derived from Ps 68:22 LXX: “they gave me gall as my food and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink,”<sup>160</sup> and Ps 21:19 LXX: “they divided my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots.”<sup>161</sup> While these psalms surely influenced the composition of this episode, the pace of performance would make their activation exceedingly difficult.<sup>162</sup>

Rather than an *intertextual* allusion, audience members are more likely to hear the nearer *intratextual* allusion, in this case, to Mark 14:25. In this way, the (Davidic) kingship of Jesus is primed, if not activated, given context for a protracted abstinence from wine. Alternatively, as mentioned above, Mark's Jesus may be understood as embracing the full intensity of the suffering appointed for him (cf. 8:29–31; 9:12; 10:33–34). Hearers making this inference will still find themselves reflecting on the paradoxical Davidic kingship of Mark's Jesus since the suffering is linked to his Davidic messiahship (cf. 8:29–31).

In sum, the Markan Jesus, already secured in the narrative as David's Lord, is once again cast using language that activates the *synkristic* assimilation to David via internal scripts associated with the suffering appointed for Jesus as

157 Hartvigsen, *Prepare*, 501; Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 743; Heil, *Mark*, 330. This script is the most likely to be activated because it is the nearest to 15:23. See further Marcus, *Mark* 8–16, 1049.

158 Hartvigsen, *Prepare*, 501; Hooker, *Mark*, 373; Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, 260.

159 Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 743.

160 van Iersel, *Mark*, 469. καὶ ἔδωκαν εἰς τὸ βρῶμά μου χολὴν καὶ εἰς τὴν δίψαν μου ἐπότισάν με ὄξος. As noted above, that David was viewed as the author of this and other psalms is supported, not only from the associated Greek superscriptions (τῷ Δαυὶδ), but also from 11QPs<sup>a</sup> (11Q5) XXVII, 2–11, which has been dated to the first half of the first century of the Common Era by James H. Charlesworth and James A. Sanders. In 11QPs<sup>a</sup> XXVII, 2–11, David is cast as a prolific psalmist, composing three thousand six hundred psalms, in addition to exorcistic songs that were to be sung over the possessed (cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 7.12.3 §305; Philo, *Plant.* 9.39; b. Pesah 117a). Regardless of whether David actually wrote the psalms, it is cast in his voice by virtue of the superscription.

161 Cf. διεμερίσαντο τὰ ἱμάτιά μου ἑαυτοῖς καὶ ἐπὶ τὸν ἱματισμόν μου ἔβαλον κλῆρον (Ps 21:19 LXX) with διαμερίζονται τὰ ἱμάτια αὐτοῦ, βάλλοντες κλῆρον ἐπ' αὐτὰ τίς τί ἄρη (Mark 15:24b).

162 See Chapter Two above.

Mark's Davidic messiah. David's Lord approaches the throne of his cross by way of a long road of righteous suffering.

### Testimony at the Crucifixion of the Markan Jesus (15:26–36)

We now come to the climactic demonstration of the characterization of *kyriotic* sonship. As the *kyriotic* Son takes his reign from the throne of the cross as David's "son," sympathetic audience members will be led to infer that the kingdom of God is manifest in the crucifixion of the *kyriotic* Son. Testimony will come from the inscription near the cross, ridicule from around the cross, the supernatural darkness, and the Markan Jesus himself, whose final words are those attributed to David (cf. Ps 21:1 LXX). We begin with the inscription near the cross.

#### *The Inscription at the Cross (15:26–27)*

The crucifixion is marked by a temporal marker, ὥρα τρίτη (15:25), at which time the audience is informed that an inscription of the charge leveled against him reads: ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων (15:26). An inscription was commonly placed on or near the crucified in order to draw ironic attention to their high social aspirations. In this case, it sought to flagrantly mock the Markan Jesus as the one who aspired to be "the King of the Jews." But might there be more to the inscription than first meets the eye? As we mentioned briefly above on 15:2, Broadhead rejects the title, "King," in the passion, arguing that the narrative abandons the title and the imagery associated with it "as an inadequate expression of Jesus's tasks and identity."<sup>163</sup> But "inadequate" does not necessarily mean "incorrect." Similarly, Focant asserts that the inscription is purely "descriptive" and is never recognized by the Markan Jesus as an appropriate title.<sup>164</sup> While it is true that the title is only evoked directly by either Pilate (15:2, 9, 12) or the soldiers (15:18), neither Focant nor Broadhead adequately addresses either (1) the impact that this title might have upon the audience's experience of the exchange<sup>165</sup> apart from the "intention" of the characters, or, more pointedly, (2) how the overall narrative portrait of the Markan Jesus

<sup>163</sup> Broadhead, *Naming Jesus*, 79.

<sup>164</sup> Camille Focant, *The Gospel According to Mark: A Commentary*, trans. Leslie R. Keylock (Eugene, Ore.: Pickwick, 2012), 631–32.

<sup>165</sup> Focant (*Mark*, 620) comes close when he writes, "Jesus is in fact king of the Jews, but in a sense other than the one Pilate must be thinking of."

in royal terms associated with David might influence audience reception of the title.

Obviously, the title, "the King of the Jews" is meant to be sarcastic and derisive in the story. However, this would not keep the audience from hearing it in support of the characterization of Mark's Jesus as a Davidic and *kyriotic* king. Recall the advice of Quintilian (*Inst.* 5.11.43) that, "sometimes, it is possible to take some remark or action of the judge or your opponent or your opponent's advocate in order to strengthen your point."<sup>166</sup> As with the false testimony in 14:55–56, the premise of the opponents is granted (e.g., the Markan Jesus must be derided, mocked, and beaten for claiming to be king), but it is in the derision itself that David's Lord comes into his own as the Davidic king of the ironic kingdom of God.<sup>167</sup>

Despite the contempt for Jesus displayed in the scene, the inscription and allusive language at Jesus's crucifixion support the characterization of *kyriotic* sonship thus far in at least three ways. First, the inscription forms a testimony from the Roman government acknowledging—even proclaiming—the kingship of Mark's Jesus: a Davidic king, God's royal co-regent, whose rule avoids traditional paths to glory.<sup>168</sup> Indeed, the narrative characterization has expressly embraced suffering at every opportunity.<sup>169</sup> Thus, while the profundity is lost on the characters in the story, perceptive audience members will understand that the inscription provides the ideal pictorial demonstration of his reign in the kingdom of God.<sup>170</sup>

Second, it is not insignificant that the Markan Jesus, as David's Lord and ironically exalted "son," is "enthroned" on a cross between two bandits (δύο ληστές) (15:27), one on his right and one on his left. Despite his protests that he was not at all a bandit (ληστής) at his arrest (14:48), he now hangs on a cross

<sup>166</sup> Nonnumquam contingit iudicis quoque aut adversarii aut eius qui ex diverso agit dictum aliquod aut factum adsumere ad eorum quae intendimus fidem.

<sup>167</sup> Once more, on appropriation and reversal of an opponent's arguments, see Riggsby, "Appropriation and Reversal," 245–56. See further on "Inference Generation in Ancient Rhetorical Theory" in Chapter Two above.

<sup>168</sup> Cf. Mark 8:29–31; 10:32–40; 11:1–11; 12:35–37. Mark's Jesus is characterized as more than God's co-regent throughout (cf. 4:35–41; 6:30–44; 6:45–62; 9:2–13), but he is certainly that, as well.

<sup>169</sup> See, e.g., Mark 8:29–31; 9:2–13; 9:31; 10:33–34.

<sup>170</sup> Working from a literary model, Moloney (*Mark*, 321) aptly remarks, "As far as the reader is concerned, however, Jesus's royalty is being exercised now that he has been crucified. Unlike any other king, Jesus is King of the Jews in his annihilation." Cf. Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 748; Philipp Vielhauer, "Erwägungen zur Christologie des Markusevangeliums," in *Aufsätze zum Neuen Testament* (München: Chr. Kaiser, 1964), 199–215.

as one of them—a man condemned as a political rebel.<sup>171</sup> For those saturated in Jewish literature, the notion of the Markan Jesus crucified between two bandits (λησταί) could activate Isa 53:12 LXX, which reads, καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἀνόμοις ἐλογίσθη.<sup>172</sup> The two terms (ἀνόμοις and λησταί) are content addressable and the placement of Jesus between the two λησταί increases the chances that the schemas and scripts associated with the Isaianic servant will be activated. Further support for this comes from the manuscript tradition, the majority of which makes the intertext explicit at Mark 15:28.

Third, in addition to scripts related to Isa 53 LXX, the audience has already associated the Markan Jesus's crucifixion with exaltation to the throne at the right hand of God in 12:35–37 and 14:61–62. In each of these contexts, Mark 10:32–40 was likewise activated for those in the audience (cf. Ps 109:1 LXX).<sup>173</sup> These audience members will find confirmation in the description of the bandits at the Markan Jesus's right and left (15:27). When they are told that the Markan Jesus was crucified with “two bandits, one at his right and one at his left (ἓνα ἐκ δεξιῶν καὶ ἓνα ἐξ εὐωνύμων αὐτοῦ),” a reference to 10:37 and 40 would be difficult to miss: τὸ δὲ καθίσαι ἐκ δεξιῶν μου ἢ ἐξ εὐωνύμων οὐκ ἔστιν ἐμὸν δοῦναι, ἀλλ’ οἷς ἡτοίμασται (10:40).<sup>174</sup>

This activation of the exchange between Jesus and the Zebedee brothers juxtaposes glory with suffering, graphically depicting the latter in language associated with the former. The positions of “glory” sought by James and John in Mark 10:37 were nothing like the brothers of Zebedee envisioned, but they were exactly what discerning audience members have been encouraged to anticipate for Mark's Jesus: in the kingdom of which he is king, the path to glory is paved with suffering. Rather than being “enthroned” between John and James, the Markan Jesus hangs between two ληστής. As we have seen above, this picture may activate scripts associated with Isa 53:12 LXX; the Markan Jesus is, indeed, numbered among the transgressors.<sup>175</sup>

<sup>171</sup> Similarly, Moloney, *Mark*, 322. Cf. Brown, *Death*, 2:969.

<sup>172</sup> Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 748. Cf. Beavis, *Mark*, 228; Donahue and Harrington, *Mark*, 443. διὰ τοῦτο αὐτὸς κληρονομήσει πολλοὺς καὶ τῶν ἰσχυρῶν μεριεῖ σκῦλα, ἀνθ’ ὧν παρεδόθη εἰς θάνατον ἢ ψυχῇ αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἀνόμοις ἐλογίσθη. καὶ αὐτὸς ἁμαρτίας πολλῶν ἀνήνεγκεν καὶ διὰ τὰς ἁμαρτίας αὐτῶν παρεδόθη. Once again, I am not arguing that this specific text would be called to mind verbatim, but rather that the script created by it (that a suffering righteous person is numbered among unsavory people) would be activated.

<sup>173</sup> See above on 12:35–37 and 14:61–62 for further discussion.

<sup>174</sup> While noting an allusion to 10:40 is not uncommon in scholarship, decidedly fewer have accounted for its import in the characterization of the cross as a temporary throne for Mark's Jesus. See, however, Hooker, *Mark*, 372; Heil, *Mark*, 331. Cf. Hartvigsen, *Prepare*, 503.

<sup>175</sup> For similar insinuations, see on 11:1–11 and 12:37 above in Chapter Five.

Thus, for sympathetic audience members the inscription of the charge against the Markan Jesus forms a testimony from the Roman government that the crucified Jesus fits the Markan portrait of the rightful king. This testimony would be integrated easily into the narrative portrait of Mark's Jesus as the *kyriot*ic Son, since it highlights the ironic exaltation of David's Lord as an unlikely (but truly Markan) candidate for David's "son." These scripts are linked once again with scripts associated with the Isaianic servant, which heightens the suffering dimension of the characterization.<sup>176</sup> The result is that Mark's Jesus is dramatically depicted as reigning from his temporary throne on the cross. For Mark's Jesus, the path to glory has been marked by great suffering (cf. 10:40), and his journey on this path is rapidly reaching its destination.

*Hints of Truth in the Ridicule of the Bystanders (Mark 15:29–32)*

As the Markan Jesus's death quickly approaches, he continues to receive further insults and mockery. As before, the insults have a ring of truth in them embedded for sympathetic audience members.

The lector recruits the audience as side-participants and invisible witnesses to the scene by offering inside information about the behavior of those who pass by the crucified *kyriot*ic Son.<sup>177</sup> When the lector reads that these passersby "blaspheme" (ἐβλασφήμουν) the Markan Jesus (15:29a), some in the audience may simply understand that they deride him with insults, which is naturally true. On the other hand, the term ἐβλασφήμουν may activate the charges of blasphemy against the Markan Jesus earlier in the narrative (2:7; 14:64), along with the insinuation that, when anyone speaks evil of the Markan Jesus they blaspheme the Holy Spirit (cf. 3:28–29). For those in the audience already convinced of the narrative portrait of Mark's Jesus as the *kyriot*ic Son, the choice of the term ἐβλασφήμουν ought to seem both fitting and just.<sup>178</sup> They have hurled insults at the one who is both David's son and Lord, the one who rightly bears the name, ὁ κύριος; as such, within Mark's story world they are guilty of blasphemy.

176 Miura notes a similar combination of Isaianic servant and what he calls "the righteous sufferer of David" in Luke's passion. See Yuzuru Miura, *David in Luke-Acts: His Portrayal in the Light of Early Judaism*, WUNT 2/232 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 172.

177 Similarly, Hartvigsen, *Prepare*, 504.

178 While the subtlety may be lost in performance, ἐξεμυκτήρισάν με in Ps 21:8–9 LXX has become ἐβλασφήμουν αὐτόν in Mark 15:29, supporting further the significance of ἐβλασφήμουν. On the activation of Ps 21:8–9 LXX, see below.



Yarbro Collins has suggested that Ps 108:25 LXX may be activated.<sup>179</sup> This psalm, which depicts “David” as the object of mockery would contribute to the overall portrait of Mark’s Jesus as ironically exalted in the midst of righteous suffering.<sup>180</sup> While the terms for shaking the head are not identical, they are nevertheless equivalent. Alternatively, Kelli O’Brien has argued for an allusion to Ps 21:7–9 LXX in the description of these deriders, “shaking their heads” (κινούντες τὰς κεφαλὰς αὐτῶν) as they hurl insults at the Markan Jesus.<sup>181</sup> In the LXX, this psalm, attributed to David, portrays a righteous sufferer beset by scoffers who “shake their heads” (ἐκίνησαν κεφαλὴν) and mock the one who hopes in the Lord (ἐπὶ κύριον) to save him (σωσάτω αὐτόν).<sup>182</sup> For O’Brien, “a preference for simplicity favours the conclusion that Mark 15:29 is a reference to Ps 22:8–9 alone and not to both Ps 22 [21 LXX] and Ps 109 [108 LXX].”<sup>183</sup>

O’Brien’s desire for simplicity is understandable, but as we have seen, the oral/aural experience of a narrative is inherently complex.<sup>184</sup> Indeed, it is doubtful that any particular *text* would be called to mind during the unrelenting performance; if any extra-Markan scripts would be activated, it would be those from broader Jewish memory—in this case, those associated with righteous suffering. That said, the nearer and more obvious script will come from *within the Markan narrative*, namely, the thrice-repeated necessity that, as the Messiah, Mark’s Jesus must suffer insults, mistreatment, mockery, violence, and death (8:28–31; 9:7–13; 10:33–34). This is most clearly and vividly depicted in Jesus’s parable of the wicked tenants (12:1–12).<sup>185</sup> There, the “son” (Jesus) is cast as the “stone the builders rejected,” who will become the cornerstone in

179 See Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 749.

180 Again, that David was viewed as the author of this and other psalms is supported, not only from the associated Greek superscriptions (τῷ Δαυιδ), but also from 11QPs<sup>a</sup> (11Q5) XXVII, 2–11. In 11QPs<sup>a</sup> XXVII, 2–11, David is cast as a prolific psalmist, composing three thousand six hundred psalms, in addition to exorcistic songs that were to be sung over the possessed (cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 7.12.3 §305; Philo, *Plant.* 9.39; *b. Pesah*, 117a). Regardless of whether David actually wrote this psalm, it is cast in his voice by virtue of the superscription. Likewise, the psalm need not be anything other than poetry for these words to be co-opted by the narrative and recognized by the audience in such a decidedly less-than-poetic context.

181 Kelli S. O’Brien, *The Use of Scripture in the Markan Passion Narrative*, LNTS 384 (London: T&T Clark, 2010), 278.

182 πάντες οἱ θεωροῦντές με ἐξεμυκτήρισάν με, ἐλάλησαν ἐν χεῖλεσιν, ἐκίνησαν κεφαλὴν (Ps 21:8 LXX).

183 O’Brien, *Scripture*, 278.

184 See further “On Performing Texts and Hearing Them” in Chapter Two above.

185 See further Iverson, “Jews, Gentiles, and the Kingdom of God,” 328.

a new edifice, a new temple (cf. 15:29–30). The implication is that this son is a Davidic king, the Messiah. But what more can be said of the specific insults hurled at Jesus as he hangs on the cross?

Given the narrative link to 12:1–12 just articulated, it would not be surprising if the mocker's first insult were to activate the "false" testimony concerning the rebuilding of a metaphorical temple (14:58 [cf. 13:1–2]): οὐδ' ὁ καταλύων τὸν ναὸν καὶ οἰκοδομῶν ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις, σώσον σεαυτὸν καταβάς ἀπὸ τοῦ σταυροῦ (15:29–30). In the discussion on 14:58 above, we saw at length that there was a great deal of truth to that testimony—truth that would be cued for the audience at the death of Jesus. As in 14:58, those familiar with the Markan narrative know that the destruction of the temple is coming soon (15:38), as is the construction of a new one, only three days later (16:1–8) (see further below). The insults of the chief priests and the scribes contain similar hints of truth, amidst the misunderstanding. The Markan Jesus has indeed "saved others." However, in order to enact a ransom for many (cf. 10:45), he can by no means "save himself" (15:31). Indeed, only those who lose their life will actually save it (cf. 8:35).<sup>186</sup> Similarly, the chief priests and scribes are right to refer to the Markan Jesus as "Messiah" (ὁ χριστός) and "King" (ὁ βασιλεύς) (15:32). However, as the audience has seen at length, most recently in 15:2–26, the notion that the "Messiah, the King of Israel" should come down from the cross makes no more sense in the Markan narrative than a king abdicating his throne.

### *Divine Testimony of Supernatural Darkness (Mark 15:33)*

Supernatural darkness covers all the earth in Mark 15:33. This portent is the first of several strange events surrounding the death of the Markan Jesus. To this point in the passion, the characterization of Mark's Jesus has been couched mostly in ironic testimony and mockery or else embedded in allusive language. However, the divine darkness brings with it direct, sincere, and forceful testimony.<sup>187</sup>

186 So also e.g., Hartvigsen, *Prepare*, 504–05; Hartman, *Mark*, 642; van Iersel, *Mark*, 471–72; Heil, *Mark*, 331–32.

187 The temporal marker, καὶ γενομένης ὥρας ἑκτῆς . . . ἕως ὥρας ἐνάτης, indicates not only that the Markan Jesus has been nailed to the cross as the object of ridicule for three hours, but it also prepares listeners for the peculiarity of this *midday* darkness, which covered ἐφ' ὅλην τὴν γῆν. Some in the audience will interpret this darkness as only covering the *land near Golgotha*, and the lexical range of γῆ certainly allows for such an understanding. However, the cosmic significance of the death of Mark's Jesus suggests that audience members ought to interpret this darkness as extending over *the totality of the world as they knew it* (see below). On local darkness, see BDAG s.v. γῆ 3. Simon Légasse, *Le procès des Jésus*,

A variety of scripts, if activated, guide the interpretation of the darkness for those in the audience. Probably most in the audience will view the darkness within the ubiquitous schema of divine testimony through prodigies and portents that surround the deaths of significant figures. For example, Philo conveys that eclipses form divine announcements of the impending death of kings (*Prov.* 2.50). Indeed, supernatural darkness is often associated with the death of significant figures across the Roman world,<sup>188</sup> such as Alexander the Great,<sup>189</sup> Romulus,<sup>190</sup> Cleomenes,<sup>191</sup> Julius Caesar,<sup>192</sup> Carneades,<sup>193</sup> and Pelopidas.<sup>194</sup>

In some instances, the darkness seems to express the dissatisfaction of the gods with the death. The remark of Diogenes Laertius concerning the death of the philosopher Carneades is illustrative of this point: “When he died, the moon is said to have been eclipsed; as one might say, the most beautiful of the luminaries in heaven next to the sun thus showed her sympathy” (*Vit. Phil.* 4.64).<sup>195</sup>

At other times, the darkness anticipates the apotheosis of a king instead of his death. For example, those who believed that Romulus was translated, related the story such that the event was accompanied by a failing of the sun, after which he was hailed as a god and a son of a god. Plutarch begins the story by recounting strange portents of daytime darkness: “Suddenly strange and unaccountable disorders with incredible changes filled the air; the light of the sun failed, and night came down upon them.”<sup>196</sup> The darkness set the stage for the transformation of Romulus from a king into a god. Livy is more

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La Passion dan les quatre évagiles 2 (Paris: Cerf, 1995), 113–15. On worldwide darkness, see BDAG s.v., γῆ 1. Marcus, *Mark* 8–16, 1053; Brown, *Death*, 2:1036; van Iersel, *Mark*, 473.

188 See further Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 752.

189 Alexander Romance 3.33.5.

190 Plutarch *Vit. Romulus* 27.6.

191 Plutarch *Vit. Cleomenes* 39.

192 Virgil *Georgics* 1.463–468; Plutarch *Vit. Caesar* 69.4–5.

193 Diogenes Laertius *Vit. Phil.* 4.64.

194 Plutarch *Vit. Pelopidas* 31.1–3. In the case of Pelopidas, however, the eclipse forms a divine testimony to his impending death.

195 τελευτώντος δ' αὐτοῦ φασιν ἐκλειψιν γενέσθαι σελήνης, συμπάθειαν, ὡς ἂν εἴποι τις, αἰνιττομένου τοῦ μεθ' ἡλίον καλλίστου τῶν ἄστρων. Cf. Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 752; Whitney T. Shiner, “The Ambiguous Pronouncement of the Centurion and the Shrouding of Meaning in Mark,” *JSNT* 78 (2000): 10; Vincent Taylor, *Gospel According to St. Mark: An Introduction and Commentary* (London: MacMillan, 1952), 593.

196 ἄφνω δὲ θαυμαστὰ καὶ κρείττονα λόγου περὶ τὸν ἀέρα πάθῃ γενέσθαι καὶ μεταβολὰς ἀπίστους: τοῦ μὲν γὰρ ἡλίου τὸ φῶς ἐκλιπεῖν, νύκτα δὲ κατασχεῖν (Plutarch, *Vit. Romulus* 27.6–7). Cf. Cic. *Rep.* 2.10.17; 6.22.24; Liv 1.16–1–3. See also, Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.56.6, which associates darkness over all the earth with Romulus's death rather than his translation.

explicit; in his version, after Romulus was translated, a crowd gathered and “hailed Romulus as ‘a god, a god’s son, the King and Father of the Roman city’” (1.16.3).<sup>197</sup>

At the most basic level, we can expect that members of the audience would infer that the darkness in Mark 15:33 forms a divine testimony announcing the death of the Markan Jesus and its significance.<sup>198</sup> Since, as we have seen, the passion continues the narrative portrait of *kyriotic* sonship, this is the characterization of Mark’s Jesus confirmed by the divine testimony.<sup>199</sup> Those in the audience for whom the schema of divine sympathy is primed may also think of the heavenly testimony offered at the baptism (1:10–11) and transfiguration (9:7), where God twice called the Markan Jesus his “beloved son.” The schema of darkness-as-sympathy would suggest that God is mourning over the death of his son.<sup>200</sup> Likewise, if the apotheosis script were primed, these audience members would be confused to find the Markan Jesus still on the cross, crying out in abandonment, as the darkness lifts (15:34). Subsequently, they may wonder whether God has suddenly abandoned him during a would-be translation. Those in this group already familiar with the Markan narrative may nevertheless find it striking that the centurion will soon offer testimony to Jesus’s divine sonship, much like the crowd in Livy’s account of the apotheosis of Romulus (15:39; see below).

Robert Gundry has objected to viewing the darkness as testimony to the Markan Jesus’s death, instead arguing darkness is the means by which God “veils and thus counteracts the shame of crucifixion.”<sup>201</sup> In support of this rendering, Gundry cites Jer 4:27–28, Amos 8:10 with 8:9 LXX (on which, see below), 2 Bar. 10:12, b. Sukk. 29a, and Ps-Clem *Recogn.* 1.41. However, the broader scripts described above would more easily and predictably triggered for listeners during the unrelenting performance than these more isolated, and, often, late scripts from Jewish and Christian memory. Marcus similarly argues from texts in Judeo-Christian tradition too obscure and too late to

197 Deinde a pauci initio facto deum deo natum, regem parentemque urbis Romanae salvere universi Romulum iubent.

198 Similarly, Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 752.

199 On a similar function of the divine testimony at the Markan Jesus’s baptism, see Chapter Three above.

200 This notwithstanding that the suffering and death of Jesus are “necessary” (δεῖ) in Mark (cf. 8:31; 9:31; 10:33–34). Here we are reminded of the divine perspective reflected in the Markan Jesus’s words, ὅτι ὁ μὲν υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ὑπάγει καθὼς γέγραπται περὶ αὐτοῦ, οὐαὶ δὲ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ ἐκεῖνῳ δι’ οὗ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου παραδίδοται· καλὸν αὐτῷ εἰ οὐκ ἐγεννήθη ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐκεῖνος (14:21).

201 Gundry, *Mark*, 964.

reliably be activated by many audience members. Arguing that the darkness in Mark 15:33 involves the “intermediacy of Satan,” Marcus points to the *Ascension of Isaiah* 4:5, where Satan is responsible for causing the moon to appear “at the sixth hour.”<sup>202</sup> However, not only is this text probably too late for an early performance audience to be acquainted with, but the similarities with Mark 15:33 are negligible when compared to the schemas and scripts noted above (and below). While such distant literary allusions could, in theory, underlie the composition of 15:33, it is doubtful that even the most perceptive audience members would infer such a subtle connection during a performance. Nevertheless, there are other aspects of Jewish cultural memory that may well be activated by the darkness in 15:33.

For those particularly familiar with Jewish scripts associated with the day of the Lord, the noun *σκότος* may activate or prime the long-standing association between darkness and Yahweh’s “day.”<sup>203</sup> Those who take a brief moment to reflect more deeply on the timing of the darkness (*ῥας ἔκτης*) may think of Amos 8:9 where “the sun goes down at noon” (*δύσεται ὁ ἥλιος μεσημβρία*),<sup>204</sup> when “darkness comes upon the earth in the daytime” (*συσκοτάσει ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἐν ἡμέρᾳ τὸ φῶς*).

Lars Hartman has objected that Mark’s “readers” would not be “so well versed in the Bible” to think of Amos 8:9 LXX (and the day of the Lord) when they came to the darkness in 15:33.<sup>205</sup> However, Hartman’s dependency upon a text-based model, which requires literacy, obscures the role of cultural schemas and scripts in the experience of an oral/aural narrative, which allows for broader oral/aural exposure to texts through participation in one’s culture. In such an oral/aural context, informed members of the audience may well associate the death of the Markan Jesus with Jewish scripts associated with the day of Lord—regardless of whether Amos 8:9 LXX is explicitly recalled during the performance.

202 Marcus, *Mark* 8–16, 1063.

203 See, e.g., Amos 5:18; 5:20; 8:9; Joel 2:1–2; 3:4 LXX. For other possible texts activated by *σκότος*, see O’Brien, *Scripture*, 281–83, who draws attention to Amos 8:9–10; Exod 10:21–23; Isa 13:9–10; 50:2–3; 60:2; Jer 4:27–28. Working from a text-based model, O’Brien finds a reference to Amos 8:9–10 LXX alone. Aside from the discussion below, I would qualify that these texts all feed into the same broad stream of Jewish tradition surrounding “darkness” and are not so easily parsed apart in performance as in reading. It is likewise not immediately clear how this “Jewish” script would interact with the more ubiquitous Roman notion of darkness as a portent from the gods.

204 The terms in Amos 8:9 are content addressable with those in Mark 15:33.

205 Hartman, *Mark*, 631.

Adela Yarbro Collins has helpfully enumerated a variety of more specific ways in which the language allusive of Amos could be appropriated.<sup>206</sup> First, it could symbolize divine wrath and judgment on those who are killing Mark's Jesus.<sup>207</sup> It is not clear whether audience members would be able to access the metanarrative of Amos given the unceasing performance. On the other hand, the darkness itself could be interpreted in this direction whether or not the metanarrative of Amos were activated. Second, the darkness could allude to Mark 14:36, which associates the Markan Jesus's suffering with the cup (of wrath).<sup>208</sup> However, it is unlikely that Mark 14:36 would be primed for the audience, given the lack of any strong lexical indicators—even content addressable ones—to help trigger the script. Third, Yarbro Collins draws attention to Amos 8:10, which, if primed or activated for hearers, could insinuate God's mourning at the death of his son.<sup>209</sup> While it is doubtful that audience members would have time to access Amos 8:10 LXX specifically during the performance, the portent in the sky could activate the script of divine testimony to the sonship of the Markan Jesus also found in 1:11 and 9:7.<sup>210</sup> Moreover, further reflection after the performance—or subsequent hearings—may trigger broader scripts associated with darkness as divine sympathy (discussed above). However, it bears repeating that, aside from the reference to darkness (σκότος), we lack any strong lexical indicators to facilitate priming or activation of Amos 8:10 during the performance itself.

While all of these connotations might be detected easily by people *reading* Mark's Gospel for themselves, picking up on them in a performance setting is a different matter since the performance does not usually stop for reflection until the end—though subsequent hearings would likely increase the chances of listeners hearing such allusions.<sup>211</sup> It is therefore most prudent to limit activation of Jewish scripts to the association of the death of the Markan Jesus with the day of the Lord.<sup>212</sup> Of course, if the day of the “Lord” is primed or activated in the Markan narrative, the referent of the “Lord” is itself a matter of ambiguity in the story world at this late stage. As the darkness settles over all

206 Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 751–52.

207 Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 752.

208 Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 752–53; idem, “From Noble Death to Crucified Messiah,” *NTS* 40 (1994): 497. Cf. Brown, *Death*, 2:1035.

209 Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 753.

210 See above on 1:11 and 9:7.

211 See further in Chapter Two above.

212 But see below on 15:38 where judgment is more palpable.

the earth, some may reason that either God's day has come or that the *kyriot* Son's day has arrived. Still others may question that the two can be separated.

In sum, the most accessible themes and scripts suggest that audience members would understand the darkness as divine testimony to the significance of the death of the Markan Jesus. However, different audience members would nuance that significance in different ways: through the insinuation of divine sympathy, apotheosis, the day of the Lord, or some combination of the three. As life ebbs away from the Markan Jesus, God offers strong testimony confirming (implicitly) Jesus's *kyriot* sonship and impressing upon audience members the gravity of what is being narrated before them; the darkness is only the beginning.

*David's Lord Speaks His Final Words in David's Voice (Mark 15:34)*

At the ninth hour, the Markan Jesus cries out in a loud voice (φῶνῃ μεγάλῃ) (15:34). It is not immediately clear what stimulates this cry, if anything in particular. In keeping with his understanding of the darkness as satanically driven (see above), Marcus has argued that "Jesus, on the cross, suffers such a sudden and intense Satanic [*sic*] assault that he becomes in some ways like a man possessed."<sup>213</sup> Marcus chooses this understanding in light of the fact that, in some streams of Jewish tradition (especially those found at Qumran), Satan is viewed as "the Angel of Darkness," who was sometimes believed to cause strange astrological phenomena.<sup>214</sup> However, there are no compelling contextual clues (not even the darkness) that suggest that audience members would deduce a satanic influence during the performance, especially since most audience members will not likely have had much exposure to the documents of Qumran, though their familiarity with scripts associated with those documents cannot be ruled out given the social matrix of first-century Roman life.

In light of the fact that the Markan Jesus has been abandoned already by all of his disciples, beaten, spit upon, and nailed to a cross—upon which he has been mocked for six hours—audience members would likely infer that he has now made a logical inference of his own: he is now fully and completely alone—abandoned even by his own father amidst the suffering he believed God had ordained for him (cf. 14:36). His cry is one of unflinching abandonment: ἐλωι ἐλωι λεμε σαβαχθανι; (15:34a). The cry is delivered for the audience

<sup>213</sup> Marcus, *Mark 8–16*, 1063. Cf. Frederick W. Danker, "The Demonic Secret in Mark: A Reexamination of the Cry of Dereliction (15:34)," *ZNW* 61 (1970): 48–69.

<sup>214</sup> Cf. 1QS III, 17–26; cf. 1QM XIII, 4–6; XVI, 11. See also, Eph 6:12. On astrological phenomena, Marcus cites Mart. Ascen. Isa. 4:5. See Marcus, *Mark 8–16*, 1063. However, as noted above, the date of Mart. Ascen. Isa is likely too late to influence first-century audiences.



first in Aramaic, which listeners would infer was his mother tongue. By couching the cry in *prosopopoeia*, the author helps reinforce the audience's experience of being transported to the Markan world.<sup>215</sup> For the benefit of those in the audience who did not understand Aramaic, the narrator underscores the gravity of the utterance by translating the line into Greek: ὁ θεός μου ὁ θεός μου, εἰς τί ἐγκατέλιπές με; (15:34b). The audience watches as David's Lord, whom the wind and seas obeyed (4:41), hangs pinned to a Roman cross, crying to his God in vain, expressing his utter dereliction.

These are the last words of the Markan Jesus and, for this reason, are crucial for his narrative characterization. Great men in antiquity typically died with some word of wisdom or profound quotation on their lips.<sup>216</sup> Those in the audience who are familiar with the psalms of individual lament may recognize that the Markan Jesus has followed popular custom. The line comes nearly verbatim from Ps 21:2 LXX, which reads, ὁ θεὸς ὁ θεός μου, πρόσχες μοι· ἵνα τί ἐγκατέλιπές με; If Ps 21:2 LXX is triggered, listeners may well recognize that these words are attributed to David (τῷ Δαυιδ).

Of all the "last words" he could have uttered, David's Lord now speaks in the voice of David himself (cf. 12:36–37). Even if these words only activate scripts associated with righteous suffering, surely it is significant that they come from David and not, for example, Isaiah. Moreover, as we saw above, Carey has demonstrated that Ps 22 (21 LXX) was used throughout Jewish and early Christian literature before and during the first-century to describe righteous suffering.<sup>217</sup> When we add to this datum an acknowledgment that the psalms (esp. the psalms of individual lament) were likely appropriated by early Christians and interpreted with reference to Jesus during their gatherings,<sup>218</sup> a situation emerges in which, for informed and attentive hearers, the Markan Jesus's final words may activate the (Davidic) psalms of individual lament—if not Ps 21 LXX in particular—in addition to broader scripts associated with righteous suffering. For those in the audience who have followed the characterization of *kyriotic* sonship thus far, these words, understood thusly, would

215 Hartvigsen, *Prepare*, 508. On *prosopopoeia*, see, e.g., Theon, *Prog.* 115–118. Cf. Ps-Hermogenes, *Prog.* 20–21.

216 See, e.g., Nero: "What an artist perishes with me!" (*Qualis artifex pereo*) (Suetonius, *Nero* 49). The convention was common enough to be the object of parody. A pseudo-philosopher was said to die crying, "I have left the earth and go to the Olympus" (Lucian, *The Passing of Peregrinus* 39). Cf. Hartman, *Mark*, 631.

217 See above on "Righteous Suffering and Mark's Passion." See further Carey, *Jesus' Cry From the Cross*, 94–125.

218 See Yarbro Collins, "Appropriation," 230–31.

form a testimony from David's *Lord* that he is surely David's *son*.<sup>219</sup> While an activation of Ps 21 LXX is by no means a certainty, in what follows the focus remains predominantly on the effect that recognizing this psalm might have on the characterization of Mark's Jesus at this point in the narrative.

These last words have garnered a great deal of attention.<sup>220</sup> Whereas most have understood 15:34 as communicating pure abandonment,<sup>221</sup> Carey has recently devoted an entire monograph to the notion that the cry of abandonment was meant to recall the entirety of Ps 21 LXX, offering hints of hope amidst the nearly overwhelming despair.<sup>222</sup> What are we to make of Carey's argument?

To be sure, it is not impossible that some in the audience would be able to access the entire psalm, especially considering the role Ps 21 LXX seems to have played in early Christianity,<sup>223</sup> and allow it to color the depiction of the Markan Jesus's suffering—especially given, as Carey notes, that the narrative flow of the passion and resurrection stories suggests that the Markan Jesus is not left finally abandoned.<sup>224</sup> However, research from the cognitive sciences suggests that the continuous temporal flow of the performance would probably make such recall exceedingly difficult during the performance, at least for those who wished to remain attentive to the performance.<sup>225</sup> Nevertheless, if the script for the vindication of a righteous sufferer were activated,<sup>226</sup> these

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219 Whether or not the historical David ever had reason to scream out "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" the language of Ps 22 (21 LXX), attributed to David in the first century, allows for a reappropriation of (even metaphorical) language for suffering to Jesus's mistreatment and death.

220 See, most recently, the literature review in Carey, *Jesus' Cry From the Cross*, 13–22. Cf. Mark G. Vitalis Hoffman, *Psalm 22 and the Crucifixion of Jesus*, LNTS 388 (New York: T&T Clark, forthcoming), Chapter 2.

221 See, e.g., Tom Thatcher, "(Re)Mark(s) on the Cross," *BibInt* 4 (1996): 346–61; Brown, *Death*, 2:1050; Vernon K. Robbins, "The Reversed Contextualization of Psalm 22 in the Markan Crucifixion: A Socio-Rhetorical Analysis," in *Four Gospels 1992: Festschrift Frans Neirynck*, ed. F. Van Segbroeck et al., BETL 100 (Louvain: Peeters, 1992), 1161–83; Lorraine Caza, *Mon Dieu, mon Dieu, pourquoi m'as-tu abandonné?*, Recherches Nouvelle Série 24 (Montréal: Bellarmin, 1989).

222 Carey, *Jesus' Cry From the Cross*, esp. 139–70.

223 See above on "Righteous Suffering and Mark's Passion." See also Carey, *Jesus' Cry From the Cross*, 115–23.

224 Carey, *Jesus' Cry From the Cross*, 164–66.

225 See Chapter Two above. For a critique of importing the entire Ps 21 LXX into Mark 15:34 from a different perspective, see Focant, *Mark*, 641–42.

226 See further Nickelsburg, *Resurrection*, 48–111, who draws our attention to Dan 3 and 6; Sus; 2 Macc 7; 3 Macc.

listeners might infer that the story is not over for Mark's Jesus. Indeed, those familiar with the Gospel of Mark as a whole—and those who recall the prophecies of resurrection (Mark 8:31c; 9:31c; 10:34c)—will be sure of it.<sup>227</sup> Some in the audience may also note that, in the story world of Mark, just as the line between suffering and victory, the barrier between abandonment and presence is rather porous.<sup>228</sup>

Dennis MacDonald has argued that we ought to understand the darkness as analogous to “a thunderbolt from Zeus,” and the cry of abandonment as pointing to Hector's feeling of abandonment in *Iliad* 22.294–303. At the end of his life, abandoned by Deiphobus his brother, Hector deduces that his gods have likewise abandoned him and that he would meet his doom utterly alone.<sup>229</sup> However, in light of the fact that the points of overlap between Mark 15:33–34 and *Iliad* 22.294–303 are only (exceedingly) broadly thematic, it is questionable that Hector's abandonment would be primed for the audience members.<sup>230</sup> Yet, MacDonald's narratival reading of Mark, which places the darkness and subsequent cry at the hideous climax of “the tightening circle around Jesus at the cross,” is more compelling. He notes the palpable progression from the initial abandonment of the Twelve at his betrayal (14:50–52) to the taunts of the passersby (15:29–30), to those from the chief priests and scribes who condemned the Markan Jesus to die (15:31–32a), to those crucified with him (15:32b). Now, the darkness suggests that even God has abandoned him (15:33).<sup>231</sup> Those in the audience who have noted this tightening of the inner circle may well interpret the darkness and the cry as expressing God's abandonment of the Markan Jesus to death on the cross. Indeed, of these audience members, those less familiar with the psalms of individual lament or for whom Psalm 21:2 LXX is left untriggered may, in retrospect, treat the darkness as a divine testimony, not of God's sympathy (see above), but of God's *abandonment* of the Markan Jesus. After all, this seems to be the Markan Jesus's understanding of it.

For these audience members, the “why?” question becomes all the more urgent, and the lack of an explicit answer as the story continues makes the abandonment all the more frustrating. This gap would naturally lead these audience members to reflect on the meaning of the Markan Jesus's death.

227 Indeed, only the most far-removed and disengaged audience members will not have heard of the scripts surrounding God's post-mortem vindication of Jesus.

228 Similarly, Carey, *Jesus' Cry From the Cross*, 167.

229 Dennis R. MacDonald, *The Homeric Epics and the Gospel of Mark* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2000), 139.

230 While questionable, the possibility cannot and should not be ruled out.

231 MacDonald, *The Homeric Epics and the Gospel of Mark*, 237 n. 31.

If the prophecies of the passion are activated (cf. 8:31; 9:31; 10:34), the audience will recall that the suffering is indeed “necessary.” Moreover, some may recall that followers were expected to bear their own suffering as the Markan Jesus did and that, “those who lose their life . . . will save it” (8:34–35).

If the darkness has also activated the general script of divine testimony to the significance of the death of an important figure, the audience may recall the importance of the Markan Jesus’s life as a ransom (10:45) and his blood as a covenant (14:24) for the benefit of many. Furthermore, those familiar with the Markan narrative may anticipate that the narrative itself will answer Jesus’s final question along these same lines. As we shall see below, the divine testimony of the tearing of the temple veil (15:38) and the testimony of the centurion (15:39) provide hints for the audience that the reason God has left the *kyriotic* Son to die on the cross lies in bringing salvation to the Gentiles.<sup>232</sup>

In sum, the Markan Jesus’s final words come from the lips of David himself. Audience members will not get a more vivid answer to the question of how David’s Lord can be his son (cf. 12:37): David’s Lord is portrayed as enduring righteous suffering, enthroned on a cross, and crying out in David’s voice for his final words. Those who miss the activation of Ps 21:2 LXX will nevertheless be prompted to consider the question of the significance of the death of the Markan Jesus, which, like the question in 12:37, will be answered as the narrative barrels along in dramatic fashion.

### *The Final Moments of David’s Lord (Mark 15:35–36)*

When some bystanders hear the Markan Jesus cry out for *ἐλωϊ*, they misunderstand and think he is appealing to *ἡλίας* for deliverance (15:35). As we have already seen in Chapter Three, Jewish tradition expected that Elijah could return to offer help to those in need since he never experienced death (cf. 2 Kgs 2:11 LXX).<sup>233</sup> The wordplay is even more striking in an oral/aural setting because the audience can experience the similarity between *ἐλωϊ* and *ἡλίας* along with the characters.<sup>234</sup>

232 Kelly R. Iverson, *Gentiles in the Gospel of Mark: “Even the Dogs Under the Table Eat the Children’s Crumbs,”* LNTS 339 (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 157. See further below on Mark 15:37–39.

233 See above on Mark 1:4–8.

234 This datum supports a performance rather than silent reading of the episode since the confusion is easier to detect through hearing than by reading. The fact that those in the audience do not seem to understand Aramaic would only strengthen their ability to understand the potential for confusion. On Mark’s propensity for translating Aramaic expressions, see 5:41; 7:43; 14:36. See also, Iverson, *Gentiles in the Gospel of Mark*, 150. Cf. Brown, *Death*, 2:1061–63.

One of the bystanders tries to bide time for Elijah to come free him from the cross. So he runs to get a stick, fills a sponge with sour wine, puts it on the stick, and gives it to the Markan Jesus to drink (15:36). Marcus suggests this character is not acting sincerely “any more than the chief priests and scribes in 15:32.”<sup>235</sup> Yet, the narrator offers no metalinguistic commentary to tip the scales toward the overtly malicious, as in 15:29–32.<sup>236</sup> Moreover, those in the audience, who have heard both the Aramaic and the translation, ought to conclude that these characters have misunderstood; the Markan Jesus was calling for *God*, not *Elijah*.<sup>237</sup> Indeed, Elijah has already come (9:13) and, in any case, sympathetic audience members will understand that Mark's Jesus is superior to Elijah (see above on 9:2–13). Thus, while a sarcastic intention cannot be ruled out on the part of the characters in 15:35–36, audience members will likely understand this event as a ghastly misunderstanding, barring a sarcastic tone in performance. Of course, even in this case, the characters wish only to prolong the Markan Jesus's suffering in order to find out whether or not Elijah will come and rescue him. Thus, even on the optimistic reading above, their motives are not truly in service of the Markan Jesus.<sup>238</sup> Even on the precipice of death, Jesus is the object of hostile machinations, which, ironically, only underscores his role as David's messianic “son” (cf. 8:27–33; 9:7–13).

### The Death of the *Kyriotic* Son and the Events that Follow (Mark 15:37–39)

The narration of the Markan Jesus's death is terse and jarring, a style in keeping with common practice for the narration of events painful for audience members to hear.<sup>239</sup> Listeners are told that he let out another loud cry (φωνήν μεγάλην) and then he breathed out his spirit (ἐξέπνευσεν). No content for the

235 Marcus, *Mark* 8–16, 1056.

236 On metalinguistic commentary in speech act theory, see Olson, *World on Paper*, 91–114. Similarly, Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 755.

237 Hartvigsen, *Prepare*, 508.

238 Psalm 68:22 LXX portrays “David” (according to the superscript) receiving sour wine from his enemies: “And they gave me gall as my food and for my thirst they gave me sour wine” (καὶ ἔδωκαν εἰς τὸ βρώμά μου χολήν καὶ εἰς τὴν δίψαν μου ἐπότισάν με ὄξος). The similarities are striking, both lexically (ὄξος) and conceptually, especially since the Markan Jesus has been portrayed as suffering righteously since the beginning of the passion. Given the pace of performance, however, an activation of this particular text seems unlikely.

239 Theon, *Prog.* 80. Cf. *Iliad* 18.20, “Low lies Patroclus,” (κεῖται Πάτροκλος) is issued as an example by Theon.

scream is specified, and so the audience is left to infer that the abandoned and crucified *kyriot* Son belts out an anguished shriek of desperation in the moment before his death. Audience members listen as the one they have been led to identify as both David's Lord and David's son, the royal Davidic king who has been assimilated to Yahweh, hangs lifelessly abandoned by God; the *kyriot* Son is dead.

The death itself will likely cue his own prophecies that he would be killed, which, in turn, ought to activate those same prophecies that also foretold his resurrection (8:31; 9:31; 10:34). For these audience members, there may be hints of victory—albeit through intense suffering—in the loud cry from the cross.<sup>240</sup> The manner in which the death is narrated may also activate Jesus's baptism for perceptive members of the audience.<sup>241</sup>

During his baptism, the Spirit entered the Markan Jesus (τὸ πνεῦμα ὡς περιστερὰν καταβαίνον εἰς αὐτόν) (1:11), and here he expels his spirit (Spirit?) (ἐξέπνευσεν) (15:37).<sup>242</sup> Likewise, whereas the heavens were rent in 1:11 (σχιζομένους), the temple curtain is rent (ἐσχίσθη) in 15:38. Moreover, God testified to the sonship of Mark's Jesus in 1:11 (σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱὸς μου ὁ ἀγαπητός), and a centurion will do the same in 15:39 (ἀληθῶς οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος υἱὸς θεοῦ ἦν) (see below). In fact, the core of the *kyriot* sonship of Mark's Jesus was embedded in the baptism.<sup>243</sup> The Markan Jesus likewise dies as one thoroughly established as both David's Lord and David's son. By joining the baptism to the death

240 Carey, *Jesus' Cry From the Cross*, 167. Similarly, Larry W. Hurtado, *Mark* (New York: Harper & Row, 1983), 257. Hurtado suggests that the loud cry is victorious in the sense that the tearing of the Temple curtain accomplishes a new access to God via a new temple (Mark's Jesus). While some in the audience may understand the scene in this way, Hurtado's discussion does not do justice to the starkness and pain couched in the loud cry.

241 The connection between the Markan Jesus's death and baptism has been noted by a number of scholars. See, e.g., Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 762; Johannes Heidler, "Die Verwendung von Psalm 22 im Kreuzigungsbericht des Markus: ein Beitrag zur Frage nach der Christologie des Markus," in *Christi Leidenspsalm: Arbeiten zum 22. Psalm; Festschrift zum 50. Jahr des Bestehens des Theologischen Seminars "Paulinum" Berlin* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1996), 26–34; Mary Ann Tolbert, *Sowing the Gospel: Mark's Work in Literary-Historical Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 281; Howard M. Jackson, "The Death of Jesus in Mark and the Miracle of the Cross," *NTS* 33 (1987): 16–37; Stephen Motyer, "The Rending of the Veil: A Markan Pentecost?," *NTS* 33 (1987): 155–57; Malbon, *Narrative Space*, 187 n. 93; William L. Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition, and Notes*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 576.

242 Similarly, Dowd, *Reading Mark*, 161–62.

243 See Chapter Three above.

of the Markan Jesus, the latter is likewise colored in shades of revelation, tones of which have often gone underappreciated.<sup>244</sup>

The narration of Jesus's death as the *kyriotik* Son is accompanied by testimonies from God and a nameless Roman centurion, both of which testify to the creation of a new temple with universal boundaries. We now turn to the first of these testimonies: the divine testimony of the splitting of the temple curtain.

*Divine Testimony in the Splitting of the Temple Curtain (Mark 15:38)*

The audience listens in amazement as the temple curtain is torn in two, from top to bottom (15:38). As we have seen above, they have been thoroughly prepared by the preceding narrative for the link between the Markan Jesus and the temple. Indeed, the juxtaposition of the death of the Markan Jesus with the tearing of the temple curtain would likely activate the matrix of Markan texts linking Jesus to the temple's doom among listeners.<sup>245</sup> Most recently, they have experienced ironic testimony from "false" witnesses that the Markan Jesus would destroy the temple made with hands and, in three days he would build another not made with hands (14:58). As discussed at length above, audience members probably intuited an amount of truth in that "false" testimony, which was later activated by the passersby who mocked the Markan Jesus with similar ironic derision (15:29–30). Audience members now listen as the lector transports them to the interior of the temple, far from the crucifixion, where the temple curtain is split apart at the death of the Markan Jesus, just as the heavens at the baptism (15:38; cf. 1:10).

A link is thus forged for audience members between the Markan Jesus's death and the splitting of the temple curtain. As we have seen, symbols were powerful tools, which could lead hearers to infer a great deal beyond what was stated explicitly.<sup>246</sup> What sorts of meanings might we expect those in the audience to attribute to the tearing of the temple curtain? Numerous options have been suggested.<sup>247</sup> David Ulansey argued that the heavens themselves are

244 But see Brian K. Gamel, "The Centurion's Confession as Apocalyptic Unveiling: The Death of Jesus as a Markan Theology of Revelation" (Ph.D. diss., Baylor University, 2014); idem, "Salvation in a Sentence: Mark 15:39 as Markan Soteriology," *JTI* 6 (2012): 65–77. Cf. Philip Ho-Young Ryou, "Apocalyptic Opening, Eschatological 'Inclusio': A Study of the Rending of the Heaven and the Temple Curtain in the Gospel of Mark with Special References to the Motif of 'Seeing'" (Ph.D. diss., University of Glasgow, 2004).

245 Cf. Mark 11:12–25; 12:10–11; 13:1–2; 14:58; 15:29–30.

246 Cf. Demetrius, *Eloc.* 243. See further Chapter Two above.

247 For a discussion of major interpretations of the tearing of the temple curtain, see Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 762–64.



symbolically torn apart as the curtain is rent.<sup>248</sup> If the baptism is activated for audience members at the tearing (ἔσχισθῆναι) of the temple curtain, they may indeed consider the rending symbolic of heaven or the sky itself being torn open (cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 3.6.4 §§12–123).<sup>249</sup> If the earlier narrativ association between the destruction of the old temple and the construction of a new one is activated,<sup>250</sup> audience members may view the tearing of the curtain as a symbolic removal of the separation between God and people.<sup>251</sup>

While it is doubtful that many in the audience understood much of anything about the interior of the temple,<sup>252</sup> the temple itself stood as the locus of cultic worship of the God of Israel—a hallmark of Judean religion known throughout the Roman world. Those who understood the portent of darkness as testifying to God's anger at the crucifixion of his son will likely interpret the symbolic tearing of the curtain in a similar manner: as divine testimony of the coming destruction of the temple.<sup>253</sup> These same audience members might also note that the tearing of the curtain occurs simultaneously with the death of the Markan Jesus, activating Mark 14:58a and 15:29a and leading to the

248 David Ulansey, "The Heavenly Veil Torn: Mark's Cosmic Inclusio," *JBL* 110 (1991): 125.

249 Yarbrow Collins's (*Mark*, 762) qualification that the curtain was an imitation of heaven is noted, but it does not mitigate the potential for symbolism.

250 Cf. Mark 11:12–25; 12:10–11; 13:1–2; 14:58; 15:29–30.

251 Donahue and Harrington, *Mark*, 452. Relatedly, see Eduard Schweizer, *Good News According to Mark* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1970), 355; Dennis E. Nineham, *The Gospel of St. Mark*, PNTC (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1968), 430; Ezra P. Gould, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Mark*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1896), 295. Similarly, Taylor, *Mark*, 596. From a slightly different angle, Eta Linnemann, *Studien zur Passionsgeschichte*, FRLANT 102 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970), 162–63, viewed the tearing of the curtain as the removal of the veil of the majesty of God. However, as Yarbrow Collins (*Mark*, 763 n. 302) points out, the term more readily takes the meaning "tear" or "split," rather than "separate" or "open."

252 Iverson, *Gentiles in the Gospel of Mark*, 151–52 n. 103. For this reason, discussions about which particular curtain might be in view are, for my purposes, superfluous. For those who consider assigning a specific referent to τὸ καταπέτασμα an impossibility, see, e.g., Juel, *Messiah and Temple*, 140–42; Gnllka, *Markus*, 2:323–24; Pesch, *Markusevangelium*, 2:498; R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 656.

253 Similarly, Marcus (*Mark* 8–16, 1066), who points out that Josephus (*B.J.* 6.5.3 §§288–300) and rabbinic traditions (e.g., *b. Yoma* 39b; *y. Yoma* 6:3 [43c]) report a variety of portents of the destruction of the Second Temple that occurred in the years prior to the event, including the spontaneous opening of its gates. On the portent of darkness, see above on Mark 15:33.

inference that his death somehow led to the temple's termination. Ironically, the death of the King of the Jews has led to the demise of the temple.

Yarbro Collins has objected to understanding the destruction of the temple as part of the symbolism of the split veil, instead connecting the tearing of the curtain so strongly to the split heavens at the baptism that she understands the torn curtain in response to the death of the Markan Jesus to be "another nontraditional [...] ironic theophany."<sup>254</sup> For Yarbro Collins, then, "the death of Jesus on the cross is accompanied by a real, but ambiguous and mysterious, theophany, which suggests that the will of God is fulfilled in the apparently shameful death of Jesus on the cross."<sup>255</sup> In support of this interpretation, Yarbro Collins sets God's *absence* at Jesus's death in parallel with God's *presence*, signified by the heavenly voice at his baptism and transfiguration.<sup>256</sup> God is ironically present throughout the Markan Jesus's final hours, symbolized by the supernatural darkness, a presence that would be understood by audience members in terms of divine testimony and experienced despite the fact that the Markan Jesus interprets the darkness as absence. The same is true with the splitting of the temple curtain, where God's presence is made evident in the testimony itself.

However, while this divine testimony signals God's presence at the death of the Markan Jesus, it does more than that. Despite Yarbro Collins's objections, it would likely also, even primarily, be interpreted in keeping with the prior divine testimony that conveyed God's mourning and displeasure at the death of his son—even if some in the audience do interpret it as an ironic theophany, displaying the presence of God in the suffering and death of his son.<sup>257</sup> By enlisting God's tearing of the temple curtain as testimony in support of the *kyriotic* sonship of Mark's Jesus, the narrative places God's authority behind its characterization yet again, offering it the support only a deity can provide.

If the tearing of the temple curtain negatively symbolized the destruction of the old temple, made with human hands, it would also activate the "false" testimony, positively symbolizing the construction of a new temple built in three days—one not made with hands. The Markan Jesus's resurrected body

<sup>254</sup> Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 764.

<sup>255</sup> Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 764; idem, "Finding Meaning in the Death of Jesus," *JR* 78 (1998): 195–96. Before Yarbro Collins, Gniska (*Markus*, 2:324) argued that the tearing of the curtain may be experienced as God's revelation of God's self in the suffering and humiliation of God's son.

<sup>256</sup> Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 764.

<sup>257</sup> There is no reason to treat these options as mutually exclusive.

will become the rejected cornerstone in the new temple with unprecedented, universal access to God (14:58b; 15:29b; cf. 12:10–11).<sup>258</sup>

In this way, the question left hanging in the final words of the Markan Jesus finds an answer in the positive symbolism of the split veil: God abandoned his son in order to create a new cultic center in the resurrected body of the suffering and crucified *kyriot* Son, through whom a ransom is paid (10:45) and a new covenant established between God and humanity (14:24).<sup>259</sup> Therefore, we should not be surprised to find a Gentile—a Roman centurion—offering the final testimony to the *kyriot* sonship of Mark's Jesus immediately following the splitting of the temple curtain.<sup>260</sup>

### *Testimony from a Centurion (Mark 15:39)*

We now arrive at the final testimony in the passion, which comes from a seemingly unlikely source: a Roman centurion. The audience is transported back to Golgotha, after returning from the “field trip” to the temple, just in time to hear the first human testimony to the sonship of Mark's Jesus. The level of *ekphrastic* detail prepares listeners for the coming testimony from a centurion by aiding their mental simulations of the scene. This centurion is carefully placed spatially, standing opposite the Markan Jesus (ὁ παρεστηκώς ἐξ ἐναντίας αὐτοῦ). Listeners are also told what moves him to speech: he saw how Jesus died (ἰδὼν . . . ὅτι οὕτως ἐξέπνευσεν). The result is that those who are invisible witnesses more easily visualize this climactic moment, which plays out before the eyes of their minds.<sup>261</sup>

The centurion's reaction from the foot of the cross has received a great deal of attention because the centurion's response can be construed in several ways when reading the words silently on a printed page. Questions surround nearly every word of Mark 15:39, beginning with the grammar and syntax.<sup>262</sup> The proper rendering of υἱὸς θεοῦ is often debated. Should it be translated

258 So also Iverson, *Gentiles in the Gospel of Mark*, 152; Juel, *Messiah and Temple*, 206.

259 Similarly, Iverson, *Gentiles in the Gospel of Mark*, 157.

260 See further Iverson, *Gentiles in the Gospel of Mark*, 153.

261 In *ekphrasis* or *demonstratio*, an event is described with such vivid detail that the scene seems to be enacted before the eyes of those in the audience. See, e.g., Theon, *Prog.* 118–120; Ps-Hermogenes, *Prog.* 22–23; Rhet. Her. 2.30.49; 4.39.51; 4.54.68; Quintilian, *Inst.* 4.2.63–64; 6.2.32; 8.3.61; 9.2.40. Cf. Webb, *Ekphrasis*, esp. 131–66.

262 For a survey of the grammatical issues involved, see Philip B. Harner, “Qualitative Anarthrous Predicate Nouns: Mark 15:39 and John 1:1,” *JBL* 92 (1973): 75–87; Tae Hun Kim, “The Anarthrous υἱὸς θεοῦ in Mark 15:39 and the Roman Imperial Cult,” *Bib* 79 (1998): 221–41. Cf. Ernest C. Colwell, “A Definite Rule for the Use of the Article in the Greek New Testament,” *JBL* 52 (1933): 12–21.

“a son of God” (indefinite),<sup>263</sup> “the son of God” (definite),<sup>264</sup> or “God’s son” (qualitative)?<sup>265</sup> Moreover, to what extent (and how) might a centurion have been able to utter what some interpreters believe is the only fully Markan human testimony?<sup>266</sup> It is far outside of the scope of this study to offer a full appraisal of scholarship on these issues.<sup>267</sup> Instead, in what follows, the discussion is limited to those questions involving the nature of the testimony and how it might be experienced in a public reading.

*Mark 15:39 and similar testimonies.* The centurion’s testimony would surely activate the prior testimonies offered to the sonship of the Markan Jesus over the course of the narrative, especially the divine testimony at his baptism and transfiguration.<sup>268</sup> Compare σὺ εἶ ὁ υἱὸς μου ὁ ἀγαπητός (1:11) and οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς μου ὁ ἀγαπητός (9:7) with ἀληθῶς οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος υἱὸς θεοῦ ἦν (15:39). It follows, then, that, aside from voice intonation and metalinguistic commentary, audience members will be encouraged to hear the centurion’s testimony in concert with those previous *testimonia* and thus as genuine and confirmatory.

However, two differences between the centurion’s testimony and those offered by God at Jesus’s baptism and transfiguration merit discussion. First, the main verb is set in the imperfect tense, rather than the present (ἦν). Second, υἱὸς θεοῦ is anarthrous, rather than articular. Some have argued that the imperfect tense is incongruous with the Markan portrayal. For example, Christoph Burchard, writes, “Er sagt »war«, und »Sohn Gottes« charakterisiert bei Markus Jesus nicht voll.”<sup>269</sup> For others, such as Joachim Gnllka, the differences between the centurion’s confession and those of the heavenly voice in 1:11 and 9:7 can reasonably be attributed to another instance of Markan christological misunderstanding.<sup>270</sup> Bénéoit Standaert has suggested that a discrepancy between the centurion’s pronouncement and the audience’s views of Mark’s Jesus might well be overlooked.<sup>271</sup>

263 E.g., Alfred Plummer, *The Gospel according to St. Mark* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1914), 361.

264 E.g., Colwell, “Definite Rule,” 12–21.

265 E.g., Harner, “Qualitative,” 75–87.

266 Most recently, see Gamel, “Centurion’s Confession.”

267 For the most recent survey of scholarship on the centurion’s confession, see Gamel, “Centurion’s Confession,” 12–32.

268 Mark 1:11; 9:7; cf. 3:11; 5:7.

269 Christoph Burchard, “Markus 15,34,” *ZNW* 74 (1983): 11.

270 Gnllka, *Markus*, 2:327. Cf. 8:27–33; 10:46–52.

271 Bénéoit Standaert, *L’Évangile selon Marc: commentaire* (Paris: Cerf, 1983), 1150.

As for the anarthrous title, Michael Peppard, among others, has argued that υἱὸς θεοῦ may be so rendered because, at the story level, the centurion testifies that the Markan Jesus is a *divi filius*, “a son of a god,” that is, a divine man, an emperor figure, or some such character with claim to divine status.<sup>272</sup> Of course, it is likewise regularly observed that the *pre-copulative* position of the title may explain the anarthrous denotation, since pre-copulative predicate nominatives are usually anarthrous and typically carry a qualitative force.<sup>273</sup> Yet this observation does not move us forward much since countenancing a qualitative force does not solve the matter of what the centurion “meant” within the story world. At a more foundational level, however, the objection that a Roman centurion would be unable to understand the Markan Jesus as *the* (Markan) Son of God fails to appreciate that there may be a difference between the locutionary force of the centurion’s response at the story level and the perlocutionary effect of that remark upon audience members.<sup>274</sup> To put the matter another way, the centurion’s intention does not necessarily dictate how (or whether) the response is assimilated into listeners’ constructs of Mark’s Jesus (see further below).

When countenancing these differences, it should not be overlooked that the Markan passion—to say nothing of the narrative as a whole—has regularly cast the speech of characters in *prosopopoeia*.<sup>275</sup> When framed in this light, the question becomes more one of how audience members might expect a *Roman centurion*, upon seeing the death of the Markan Jesus, to speak of that death. When the matter is put thusly, no title would be more appropriate than the syntactically polyvalent υἱὸς θεοῦ. Like the high priest’s, “the Christ, the Son of the Blessed,” and Pilate’s “King of the Jews,” this title is as at home in the cultural world of the speaker as it is in Mark’s story world.<sup>276</sup>

*How would audience members hear Mark 15:39?* Now, to be sure, what exactly the listeners would hear when the centurion utters ἀληθῶς οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος

272 Michael Peppard, *The Son of God in the Roman World: Divine Sonship in Its Social and Political Context* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 130–31; Hartman, *Mark*, 632, 646. Cf. Adela Yarbro Collins, “Mark and His Readers: The Son of God among Greeks and Romans,” *HTR* 93.2 (2000): 96; Marcus, *Mark* 8–16, 1058.

273 Harner, “Qualitative,” 75–87. Cf. Rodney J. Decker, *Mark 9–16: A Handbook on the Greek Text* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2014), 263.

274 As we have seen to this point, capitalizing on the irony created by the tension between a locutionary act of a character and its perlocutionary effect from the author has been a regular rhetorical feature in Mark’s Gospel.

275 Cf. Mark 14:61; 15:2; 15:34. For more on *prosopopoeia*, see, e.g., Theon, *Prog.* 115–118. Cf. Ps-Hermogenes, *Prog.* 20–21.

276 On the title υἱὸς θεοῦ, see above on 1:1 in Chapter Three.

υἱὸς θεοῦ ᾧ is a different question altogether. Would they hear further mocking derision or a genuine testimony to the sonship of the Markan Jesus? Most have understood the centurion's response as thoroughly Markan, even if dripping with dramatic irony.<sup>277</sup> However, there is considerable disagreement as to how that irony works.

Yarbro Collins is representative of the majority of scholars, who take the confession as an acknowledgement that "the real Son of God, the real ruler of the world, has died a shameful and horrifying death on a cross."<sup>278</sup> In contrast, Juel, among others, has argued that the centurion "plays a role assigned to all Jesus's enemies [e.g., the high priest and Pilate]: They speak the truth in mockery, thus providing for the reader ironic testimony to the truth."<sup>279</sup> Ahearne-Kroll follows Juel, noting that, to understand the centurion's response as a "confession of faith" would be to "go against the pattern of characters from the beginning of chapter 14."<sup>280</sup> Stephen D. Moore puts the same concern differently, wondering whether we can really expect a Roman centurion to succeed, given the abject failure of all of the Markan Jesus's disciples.<sup>281</sup>

In terms of performance, whether or not the centurion's "confession" would be heard as mocking derision or as a genuine testimony would ultimately have been up to the lector, whose choice of voice intonation and intensity could sway audiences in either direction. However, the fact that we lack audio or video from first-century performances of Mark's passion need not deter us from imagining which sort of performance is more likely.

At this point, the work of David Olson on metalinguistic commentary in speech act theory is, once again, helpful.<sup>282</sup> As we saw in the treatments of Mark 14:55–65, 15:16–20a, and 15:33–37, audience members are taught how to hear the actions and words of others in relation to the Markan Jesus. For example, listeners are informed that the Jewish leadership could find no

277 E.g., Shiner, "Ambiguous," 3–22; Beavis, *Mark*, 232; Iverson, "A Centurion's 'Confession,'" 329–50. However, Shiner allows for more ambiguity than does either Beavis or Iverson, who understand the pronouncement as purely positive.

278 Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 769.

279 Juel, *A Master of Surprise*, 74 n. 7. See also, Earl S. Johnson, "Is Mark 15.39 the Key to Mark's Christology?," *JSNT* 31 (1987): 3–22; Dowd, *Reading Mark*, 162; Richard A. Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story: The Politics of Plot in Mark's Gospel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 252.

280 Ahearne-Kroll, *Jesus' Davidic Suffering*, 221.

281 Stephen D. Moore, "Deconstructive Criticism: Turning Mark Inside-Out," in *Mark and Method: New Approaches in Biblical Studies*, ed. Janice Capel Anderson and Stephen D. Moore (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008), 107.

282 Olson, *World on Paper*, 91–114.

testimony against Jesus (14:55), because the testimonies were *false* and *did not agree* (14:56). Then, before they hear the specific testimony, it is repeated that, “some stood up and gave false testimony against him” (14:57). Finally, as if there were any question, the audience is told that soldiers who (mis)treat Jesus as king were “mocking him” (15:20). As Kelly Iverson has recently demonstrated, not only does Mark 15:39 lack any sarcastic metalinguistic commentary, but the fact that the centurion’s testimony itself claims to be speaking truthfully (ἀληθῶς) suggests that the line would be performed as a genuine testimony on the centurion’s part.<sup>283</sup>

This fundamental observation is further strengthened by at least four additional points. First, the fact that the testimony is offered *after* the death of the Markan Jesus separates it from the previous mockery. Second, Ahearne-Kroll’s complaint that a genuine testimony would cut against the pattern begun at the beginning of Mark 14 overstates the matter. As we saw above, there is reason to believe that some audience members would understand the offer of sour wine in 15:35–36 as a genuine misunderstanding, rather than derision—even if the characters still showed a lack of compassion for the Markan Jesus. Third, breaking a pattern can be more rhetorically powerful than maintaining one.<sup>284</sup> Fourth, as we shall see below, the *Roman* centurion’s “seeing” (ἰδών) followed by a testimony that insinuates belief, stands in contrast to chief priests and scribes who mockingly ask for a sign so that they might “see and believe” (ἰδῶμεν καὶ πιστεύσωμεν) (15:32). In this context, the centurion has “seen” the profundity in the death of the Markan Jesus. Unlike the chief priests and scribes, the centurion has taken the signs given to him (principally the midday darkness and the cry of abandonment), rather than demanding a sign of his choosing.

If this line of reasoning is correct, and if the line were performed as authentic testimony, how would audience members experience the centurion’s reaction? The placement of the centurion right in front of the Markan Jesus and the fact that he “sees” (ἰδών) the Markan Jesus as he “expires thusly” (οὕτως ἐξέπνευσεν) will inform audience speculation. Given these factors, listeners will most likely reason that the centurion has seen the gruesome death and the

283 Iverson, “A Centurion’s ‘Confession,’” 331–36.

284 Iverson notes that the centurion not only breaks the pattern of mockery but also fulfills the pattern of asymmetrical character portrayals that are peppered throughout the Gospel. In the centurion, “not only is a Gentile the first to enter the new temple made without hands (11:12–25; 12:1–12; 14:58), but it is a ranking member of the Roman army who affirms that the true son of God is Jesus and not Caesar” (Iverson, “A Centurion’s ‘Confession,’” 342, cf. 339–42).



portent of darkness,<sup>285</sup> which he has interpreted in light of the scripts associated with strange events surrounding the death of kings or important figures (see above).<sup>286</sup>

If the earlier claims to “sight” (or the desire for “sight”) are activated by ἰδῶν, audience members will be led to contrast the centurion with those who mocked the Markan Jesus (15:32), as well as the person who offered him sour wine to “see” whether Elijah would come to take him down (15:34). Moreover, the audience’s experience as invisible witnesses at the tearing of the temple curtain would be easily incorporated into their comprehension of the centurion’s experience given the pace of the performance and the fusion of the temple curtain portent with the scene at Golgotha. However, the question of whether the audience would hear the centurion offer testimony that the Markan Jesus is a *divi filius* or whether they would hear the testimony in concert with the Markan testimony at the baptism and/or transfiguration is a different matter.

Some in the audience would surely have heard the centurion, at least initially, as offering genuine testimony that the Markan Jesus was a *divi filius*, a son of god, like, for example, Caesar Augustus. After all, this is the sort of thing a *Roman* centurion might say about one whose death was marked by divine testimony through prodigies or portents. Moreover, it cannot be minimized, even through diligent syntactical work, that the title lacks the article. Yet, those in the audience who heard the centurion testify that the Markan Jesus “was a son of god” *in a genuine manner* would likely have no difficulty incorporating the testimony as a fully Markan acclamation of the *kyriotic* sonship of Jesus, especially given the content addressability between the centurion’s υἱὸς θεοῦ and the Markan ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ. As Standaert writes, “le soldat dit [. . .]: «était» (ἦν), mais le croyant dit: «est»; le soldat dit «fils de Dieu», le chrétien sait qu’il est actuellement «le Fils de Dieu».”<sup>287</sup> The centurion’s, “this man *was* a son of god” would easily be assimilated into the narrative characterization that Mark’s Jesus “*is* the Son of God.”

285 So also, e.g., Gould, *St. Mark*, 295; Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 765. It is unlikely, however, that the centurion will be thought to have witnessed the tearing of the temple curtain since it occurs away from the cross.

286 For a discussion of scholarly opinions on what the centurion specifically saw, see Brown, *Death*, 2:1144–46. However, Brown’s ruling that the centurion will have “seen” the tearing of the temple curtain is not convincing, primarily because his objection is unconvincing that the location of the temple curtain is irrelevant (2:1145). While the audience, as invisible witnesses, will incorporate the rending of the curtain into their own experience of the Markan Jesus’s death, their own position in the story is elevated above the centurion.

287 Standaert, *Marc*, 1150.

That this assimilation would reliably take place is supported by cognitive scientific research, which demonstrates that when people hear a term or phrase their brains automatically and unconsciously scan their mental lexicons for the corresponding entry and activate the associated terms, scripts, schemas, and themes.<sup>288</sup> In this case, when υἱὸς θεοῦ is heard, the scripts and schemas associated with υἱός, θεός, υἱὸς θεοῦ, and ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ will be primed or activated. Since the Markan *kyriotic* conception of ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ has been the most heavily primed of these entries, we may reason that it will be the most likely activated. In other words, upon hearing υἱὸς θεοῦ audience members will probably think of Mark's *kyriotic* ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ.

On the other hand, some in the audience may not notice the lack of article in the title during the temporal flow of performance, especially given the trustworthy testimony of the narrator that Mark's Jesus is (anarthrous) υἱὸς θεοῦ at the story's incipit (1:1). If this *initial* testimony in the story is activated, these members may interpret the centurion's testimony as offering the *final* acclamation of Mark's Jesus as God's son; the ἦν would then look back at either his suffering and death or the entire narrative portrait.<sup>289</sup> Those who understand ἰδὼν . . . ὁ κεντυρίων . . . ὅτι οὕτως ἐξέπνευσεν as signifying the centurion's experience of the portents and the Markan Jesus's death in abandonment will likely also have his suffering and the lamentable nature of his death primed. However, if the *inclusio* with the incipit is countenanced, the entire narrational portrait may be recalled. In either case, "this one" who hangs lifelessly is identified as υἱὸς θεοῦ: David's Lord has been paradoxically exalted as David "son" on the throne of his cross.

Lastly, an intriguing complement to the Markan nature of the centurion's testimony lies in the positioning of the centurion directly in front of the Markan Jesus. Those in the audience who inferred that the Spirit took possession of the Markan Jesus at the baptism<sup>290</sup> may likewise intuit that in his final breath, the Markan Jesus breathed his Spirit (ἐξέπνευσεν) *into* the centurion (cf. 1:10).<sup>291</sup> These audience members would be confirmed in that inference

288 For further discussion of the activation and priming of the mental lexicon, see Chapter Two above; see also, Patrick C. Hogan, *Cognitive Science, Literature, and the Arts: A Guide for Humanists* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 42–58.

289 Similarly, Klemens Stock, "Das Bekenntnis des Centurio. Mk 15:39 im Rahmen des Markusevangeliums," *ZKT* 100 (1978): 296–97; Brown, *Death*, 2:1151.

290 See above on Mark 1:10 in Chapter Three.

291 Similarly, the Johannine Jesus breathes out the Spirit upon his followers after his resurrection, using content addressable terms (ἐνεφύσησεν; John 20:22). At his death, however, he "bowed his head and gives up his spirit" (κλίνας τὴν κεφαλὴν παρέδωκεν τὸ πνεῦμα) (John 19:30).

by the great care the narrator took in situating the centurion in front of the dying Markan Jesus with *ekphrastic* language. If all these factors lined up, the result would be that at least some audience members probably inferred that the centurion offers *inspired* testimony to Mark's Jesus as God's son, just as the heavenly voice did at the baptism and the transfiguration (1:11; 9:7). As we saw above in Mark 15:34, this would also provide a narrative answer to the question left hanging on the lips of the dying Markan Jesus: God abandoned his son in order to open salvation to the Gentiles, of which the centurion was the first.<sup>292</sup>

Yarbro Collins has objected to understanding any additional connotations for ἐξέπνευσεν, pointing out that the term is idiomatic for the act of dying equivalent to the English, "expired."<sup>293</sup> But this refusal of a deeper, latent meaning cuts against the grain of the rhetorical leverage of polyvalency in the figure of *emphasis*.<sup>294</sup> Yarbro Collins is responding to a reading offered by Howard Jackson, in which the Spirit exits (ἐξέπνευσεν) the Markan Jesus with such force that it splits the temple curtain.<sup>295</sup> While the notion that the Spirit left the Markan Jesus with such force that it rent the temple curtain is certainly, in Yarbro Collins's terms, "bizarre,"<sup>296</sup> this is no reason to reject the idea that some in the audience will, in the words of Quintilian, extract a hidden meaning from the phrase (*Inst.* 9.2.64). Indeed, given the activation of the baptism by ἐξέπνευσεν—a possibility that Yarbro Collins does not dispute—there is reason to believe that the narrator has left "more to be suspected than has been actually asserted" (*Rhet. Her.* 4.53.67). This would be the case all the more if the promise of Spirit-baptism (also from the prologue) were primed or activated (1:8).<sup>297</sup> On the one hand, the Markan Jesus has simply died, a sorrowful event narrated with brevity that ancient rhetors would laud (ἐξέπνευσεν).<sup>298</sup> On the other hand, the fact that such an unlikely figure offers such a profound and potent testimony to the sonship of Mark's Jesus strongly suggests that the

292 See further Iverson, *Gentiles in the Gospel of Mark*, 153–58.

293 Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 763.

294 For a discussion of *emphasis* in ancient rhetorical theory, see Chapter Two above.

295 Jackson, "Death of Jesus in Mark," 27. Gundry slightly adjusts Jackson, as does Evans adjusting Gundry. See Gundry, *Mark*, 949–50; Craig A. Evans, *Mark 8:27–16:20*, WBC 34B (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 508–09.

296 Yarbro Collins, *Mark*, 763.

297 αὐτὸς δὲ βαπτίσει ὑμᾶς ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ (1:8). In a brief note, Motyer also notes the significance of ἐξέπνευσεν, though only as a passing comment. Motyer's aims are more comprehensive, and indeed ambitious, than my own in this context. See Motyer, "Rending of the Veil," 157.

298 Theon, *Prog.* 80. Cf. *Iliad* 18.20, "Low lies Patroclus," (καίτῃ Πάτροκλος) is issued as an example by Theon.

Markan Jesus might be understood, at least by audience members, as breathing the Spirit upon the centurion (ἐξέπνευσεν). In this case, the centurion would be considered the first to be baptized by Jesus with the Holy Spirit (cf. 1:8).

While the possibility of leaving the inspired nature of the response to audience inference is intriguing and has basis in ancient theory regarding *emphasis*—to say nothing of the benefit of general ambiguity<sup>299</sup>—the hint is so subtle that many in the audience might miss it, especially during the unrelenting performance. There is, however, sufficient evidence to suggest that others may appreciate the subtlety, especially if John's promise of a coming Spirit-baptizer is primed or activated by the episode (cf. 1:8).

But what if the line was performed sarcastically instead rather than as genuine testimony?<sup>300</sup> No problem would be created for audience members concerning the portrait of Mark's Jesus. The derision would simply be another in a long line of ironic testimonies intended at the story level as antagonism, but experienced by audience members as rightful, if ironic, acclamation.<sup>301</sup> In this case, the centurion would join the ranks of the high priest, Pilate, other Roman soldiers, the passersby, and the chief priests and the scribes, all of whom spoke or acted better than they knew. However, as we have seen, metalinguistic commentary, the immediate context, the larger matrix of testimony from the rest of the narrative (cf. 1:11; 9:7), as well as the universalistic symbolism of the torn temple curtain suggest that the centurion's "confession" ought to have been performed as authentic and genuine testimony in support of the divine sonship of Mark's Jesus.

#### What Sort of Witness is the Centurion?

Those in the audience familiar, whether directly or indirectly, with Aristotle's theory of witnesses, would categorize the Roman centurion as a "witness from a distance" that is, a witness completely unconnected to the matter at hand (the sonship of Mark's Jesus).<sup>302</sup> These witnesses were considered very trustworthy in matters of the "quality" of an act or claim, "whether it is just or unjust, expedient or inexpedient" (οἷον δίκαιον ἢ ἀδίκον, εἰ συμφέρον ἢ ἀσύμφερον).<sup>303</sup> In the case of the death of the Markan Jesus, a Roman centurion with no ostensible connection to the Markan Jesus or

299 On the benefit of ambiguity, see Demetrius, *Eloc.* 222. See also, Chapter Two above.

300 See most recently, Nathan Eubank, "Dying with Power. Mark 15:39 from Ancient to Modern Interpretation," *Bib* 85 (2014): 247–68.

301 So also, e.g., Juel, *A Master of Surprise*, 74 n. 7. See further above.

302 Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1.15.13–19, esp. 1.15.16–17. See further Chapter Two above.

303 Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1.15.16.

his message is one of the most reliable witnesses to call in the defense of the Markan portrait, from a legal standpoint.<sup>304</sup> One who has no reason to support the claims of the narrative does just that by acclaiming that, "this man was truly God's son" (15:39).

### Concluding Remarks

The placement of the centurion's testimony not only at the end of the Markan narrative, but at the end of the passion, subsumes the entire characterization of Mark's Jesus under the title, "God's son." While too much has been made of the import of titles in previous scholarship, the narrative importance assigned to υἱὸς θεοῦ should not be ignored.

The narrator first hailed Mark's Jesus as υἱὸς θεοῦ (1:1), which signaled to listeners that divine sonship lay at the foundation of the characterization of Mark's Jesus. However, beginning in the prologue, there were hints that this Son of God was distinctively related, even assimilated, to both Yahweh and David, relationships which were insinuated ever so subtly through allusive language that encouraged audience members to infer a comparison between both Mark's Jesus and Yahweh (1:3, 7, 12–13) and Mark's Jesus and David (cf. 1:1, 9–11; 12–13).

As the narrative progressed so too was the audience carried along in the development of this portrait until the question of the nature of this *kyriotic* sonship was brought to the fore in 12:37: "David calls him 'Lord,' so in what way is he his 'son'?" This infamous question was left unanswered for the audience until the passion where, as we have just seen, it was set before the audience in dramatic fashion: David's Lord is David's "son" inasmuch as he is exalted upon the throne of the cross—the temporary reigning place for Mark's Davidic messiah. This is the characterization confirmed by the centurion's testimony that the dead and abandoned "King of the Jews" is "God's son." Importantly, it is this testimony that forms an *inclusio* with the narrator's testimony in the incipit, situating the entire narrative about the portrait of Mark's Jesus as the suffering *kyriotic* Son.<sup>305</sup>

Whether genuine or sarcastic, inspired or matter of fact, this testimony from a Roman centurion would be assimilated into the overarching characterization held by sympathetic members of the audience that Mark's Jesus is the

304 Of course, those who considered his speech inspired would trust him for additional reasons.

305 Similarly, Jack Dean Kingsbury, *The Christology of Mark's Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1983), 128–33.

*kyriotic* Son. The long and subtle rhetorical unfolding of *kyriotic* sonship is now complete.

### Testimony to the Resurrection of the *Kyriotic* Son (Mark 16:1–8)<sup>306</sup>

From the prologue to the passion, testimony has been a vital rhetorical tool used in Mark's characterization of Jesus. Thus far, the narrative has brought forth testimony from the narrator (1:1), "Isaiah" (1:2–3), John (1:7–8), God (1:9–11; 9:7; 15:33; 15:38), unclean spirits (1:24; 3:11; 5:7), David (2:21–28; 12:36), Bartimaeus (10:47–48), the Markan Jesus himself (14:62; 15:2; 15:34), and, finally, a Roman centurion (15:39). To these we now add that of an angelic messenger inside the otherwise empty tomb (16:6–7).

The audience listens as certain women, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome come to the Markan Jesus's tomb to anoint his body (16:1). These are the same women who were the only other sympathizers to witness his death (from afar) (15:40–41). We may then expect that sympathetic audience members will be engulfed in the narrative world together with the women, who are the only sympathizers with the Markan Jesus to have been present at his death.<sup>307</sup> Moreover, since the audience enjoys an "elevated" position within the narrative, they will likely anticipate that these women will unknowingly become the first to discover the resurrected *kyriotic* Son.<sup>308</sup>

The women find "a young man, dressed in a white robe (στολήν λευκήν), sitting on the right side" of the otherwise empty tomb (16:5).<sup>309</sup> The appearance of this "young man" (νεανίσκος) may activate the unidentified "young man" (νεανίσκος) who fled naked at Jesus's arrest (14:51).<sup>310</sup> The appearance of the young man first dressed for death (14:51) now fits the time of resurrection

306 There is much debate over the ending of Mark's Gospel. For the purposes of this study, I present the impact of a performance of the story as it ends in 16:8a. While earlier versions of Mark may have included an ending similar to Matthew, we have no evidence for it. Likewise, with the vast majority of scholars, I hold that the longer endings were added at some point in the second century, perhaps in an attempt to unify the fourfold gospel tradition. Regardless, neither the longer ending nor a hypothetical missing ending concerns this study. On the endings of Mark and their function in early Christianity, see James A. Kelhoffer, *Miracle and Mission: The Authentication of Missionaries and Their Message in the Longer Ending of Mark*, WUNT 2/112 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000).

307 On audience identification, see Chapter Two above.

308 Cf. Mark 8:31; cf. 9:9; 9:31; 10:34.

309 εἶδον νεανίσκον καθήμενον ἐν τοῖς δεξιοῖς περιβεβλημένον στολήν λευκήν (16:5).

310 Andrew T. Lincoln, "The Promise and the Failure: Mark 16:7, 8," *JBL* 108 (1989): 292–93.

(16:5). The νεανίσκος connection notwithstanding, the stronger connection is with the glorious appearance of the transfigured Markan Jesus (9:5), whose garments became dazzling white (στίλβοντα λευκά). Moreover, the man's position, "sitting on the right side" (καθήμενον ἐν τοῖς δεξιαῖς) may activate the twice-repeated Ps 109:1 LXX placed on the lips of Jesus in Mark 12:36 (κάθου ἐκ δεξιῶν μου) and 14:62 (ἐκ δεξιῶν καθήμενον). If any or all of these scripts are activated, audience members may initially interpret the man dressed in white and seated at the right side of the tomb as the exalted and risen Lord.<sup>311</sup> Those in the audience who had previously interpreted 12:36 and 14:62 as referring, albeit in a veiled manner, to the cross as an ironic throne for an ironic king<sup>312</sup> will likely augment that decision at this point: The cross was merely a temporary throne, a surrogate for the heavenly throne awaiting the risen Lord.<sup>313</sup> They now experience a dramatic portrayal of the heavenly enthronement of Mark's Jesus in the man's surrogacy for the *kyriotic* Son, once dead, now exalted to the right hand of God (cf. 12:35–37). Alternatively, audience members may think the young man is some supernatural being,<sup>314</sup> probably an angel.<sup>315</sup> Otherwise, as Yarbrow Collins has suggested, they may interpret the man's physical appearance as embodying the testimony he gives verbally: the crucified one is risen.<sup>316</sup>

The young man's testimony rings out clearly for those in the audience, who will not be as surprised as the women:

Do not be alarmed! You are seeking Jesus the Nazarene—the Crucified One. He is risen; he is not here! See the place where they laid him. But go,

311 Hartvigsen, *Prepare*, 520. Similarly, Gundry, *Mark*, 991. Of course, the content of the testimony itself will dispel the idea that the young man is the Markan Jesus himself (ἡγέρθη, οὐκ ἔστιν ὧδε). On the cross as a temporary throne, see above on Mark 15:26–27; cf. 12:35–37; 14:62–63.

312 See above on 12:36 and 14:62.

313 Yarbrow Collins (*Mark*, 795) writes about the striking description of the young man: "the audiences are led to reflect on its symbolic import and to recall the citation of Ps 110:1 (109:1 LXX) earlier in the narrative."

314 So also Lührmann, *Markusevangelium*, 269; Hartman, *Mark*, 653, 660.

315 This observation is almost universal among Markan commentators. See, e.g., Hooker, *Mark*, 384; Heil, *Mark*; Brown, *Death*, 1:299–300; Donahue and Harrington, *Mark*, 485; Moloney, *Mark*, 345; Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 795; Pilgaard, *Markusevangeliet*, 383; Marcus, *Mark 8–16*, 2:1085; Hartvigsen, *Prepare*, 521. For similar angelic dress in figures from Jewish and Christian cultural memory, see 2 Macc 3:26, 33; Tob 5:9; Acts 1:10; 10:30; Rev 6:11; 7:9, 13; Josephus, *Ant.* 5.8.2 §277.

316 Yarbrow Collins, *Mark*, 795.



tell the disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; you will see him there, just as he told you (Mark 16:6–7).<sup>317</sup>

The injunction against alarm would be fitting for those in the audience and the women alike, though for different reasons: those in the audience presumably expected a risen Jesus, not an absent one, whereas the women did not expect a risen Jesus at all. The testimony to the *resurrection* of “Jesus the Nazarene” (16:6b) would most likely activate Jesus’s prophecies of his resurrection,<sup>318</sup> along with texts that specify the Nazarene origins of the Markan Jesus.<sup>319</sup> Regardless of which specific text(s) is activated, the resulting perlocutionary effect focuses attention on the characterization of Mark’s Jesus as disclosed to the audience through testimony.

The words of the young man form the final testimony in the long line of *testimonia* offered over the course of the narrative, beginning with the narrator’s own testimony in 1:1. They also form the final words spoken by any character in the story itself, since the remainder of the story is commentary from the narrator. If the young man were considered a divine being of some sort—which seems likely judging from his appearance and role as a messenger—the utterance would be considered testimony reflecting the divine perspective, the most trustworthy sort of speech in ancient rhetorical theory.<sup>320</sup> This testimony confirms that Mark’s Jesus has been raised from the dead, just as he prophesied (cf. 8:31c; 9:31c; 10:34c). The time for resurrection has come with divine testimony. Fittingly, testimony, which began the Gospel (1:1), now brings it to a close (16:6–7).

Whether or not the women finally tell the disciples or never break their silence is a matter of intense debate. In this context, it is only important to highlight that diversity will reign. However, there will probably be those who understand the women’s silence as abject failure, as well as those who interpret it as ecstatic silence, which lasted only as long as it took the women to reach the disciples. Regardless of which view(s) audience members held, as the story draws to an abrupt close, listeners now find themselves abandoned,

317 μὴ ἐχθαμβεῖσθε· Ἰησοῦν ζητεῖτε τὸν Ναζαρενὸν τὸν ἐσταυρωμένον· ἡγέρθη, οὐκ ἔστιν ὥδε· ἴδε ὁ τόπος ὅπου ἐβηκαν αὐτόν. ἀλλὰ ὑπάγετε εἰπατε τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ καὶ τῷ Πέτρῳ ὅτι προάγει ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν· ἐκεῖ αὐτὸν ὄψεσθε, καθὼς εἶπεν ὑμῖν.

318 Cf. Mark 8:31c; 9:31c; 10:34c.

319 Mark 1:9, 24; 10:47; 14:67.

320 See Chapter Two above.

not only by the women, but also by the Markan Jesus himself.<sup>321</sup> Now alone, sympathetic audience members must decide whether they will take up the message and proclaim Mark's Jesus as the *kyriotic* Son or remain silent, content to keep this characterization to themselves, stifling the good news that was embedded in the prologue and played out before their eyes over the course of the entire performance.

### Summary of the Dramatic Portrayal of Mark's Jesus as the *Kyriotic* Son

The passion presents a response to the question, "David calls him 'Lord,' so in what way is he his 'son'?" (12:37) As we have seen, David's Lord is also David's "son" by means of his ironic and paradoxical exaltation; he undergoes pain, abandonment, mockery, and death in ways evocative of earlier narrative episodes, as well as a combination of scripts associated with the notion of righteous suffering, cast in language borrowed from the psalms of individual lament and Deutero-Isaiah. The high priest's question, coupled with the Markan Jesus's response, activated the narrative portrait of Mark's Jesus as God's son, a royal Davidic messiah who eschewed political power, opting instead for enthronement on the cross, power in weakness, and victory in defeat. This Markan suffering righteous figure also benefitted from *synkristic* assimilation to Yahweh, which set him apart from all other portraits of Davidic kings in Jewish recollection (cf. 14:61–62).

This characterization was bolstered by Pilate's question—co-opted as testimony by the elusive response of the Markan Jesus—and the doubly ironic coronation from the Roman soldiers (15:1–20a). After the *kyriotic* Son took his throne on the cross, God offered his own testimony confirming the portrait by insinuating his own grief over the death of his son (15:33). The symbolic destruction of the old temple through the divine tearing of the temple's curtain confirmed the "false" testimony that Mark's Jesus would destroy the temple made with hands and build another not made with hands (15:38; cf. 14:58).

To all of this, the narrator adds the testimony of a Gentile, a Roman centurion, whose speech may even have been considered inspired by some, that this shattered and broken man from Nazareth was none other than God's son (15:39). In this way, the passion, which at the story level portrays the trial(s)

321 Bridget Gilfillan Upton, *Hearing Mark's Endings: Listening to Ancient Popular Texts Through Speech Act Theory* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2006), 152.

and execution of the Markan Jesus, dramatically confirms his characterization as the *kyriotic* Son for audience members (cf. 12:37).

As we have seen, the seeds for this portrait were sown in the opening moments of the story and watered over the course of the entire narrative. The passion drives home that which sympathetic listeners ought to have already inferred by this point. For all others, opportunity for further reflection and consideration has arrived with the testimony of the “young man” and the silence of the women at Jesus’s empty tomb.

The account of the Markan Jesus’s resurrection provides the final testimony of the Gospel. The physical appearance of the angelic young man connoted the exalted Lord and his testimony would have been received as confirming the divine perspective. The Gospel that began with testimony (1:1–3) now closes with one (16:6–7). Whether the women are viewed as failures or faithful, audience members are now left alone and must decide how they will respond to angelic testimony, with its accompanying commission to offer testimony of their own.

Those who have thus far remained unconvinced will not likely find themselves moved by the empty tomb—especially considering the potential for understanding the women’s response as silent failure. However, for those tracking with the narrative characterization to this point, this testimony provides the crowning confirmation of the *kyriotic* sonship of Mark’s Jesus—David’s Lord endured his appointed suffering and his temporary throne on the cross, only to be exalted to the right hand of Yahweh (cf. 12:35–37). All that remains is for them to offer testimony of their own.

## Conclusions: Tracing and Unpacking *Kyriotic* Sonship

Our long journey has now come to an end. What follows is a summary of the main arguments and conclusions of the study. The discussion is extended somewhat by offering brief reflections on the goal and functions of the rhetoric of inference and *kyriotic sonship* in Mark's Gospel. Finally, the chapter will conclude with a summary of the characterization of Mark's Jesus as the *kyriotic* Son and suggestions for future research.

### Tracing *Kyriotic* Sonship in Mark's Gospel

Since the preponderance of evidence suggests that literacy rates were between five and fifteen percent in a culture that prized oral delivery and rhetoric, this study has approached Mark's Gospel as a text intended for performance—whether through simple recitation, a one-person performance from memory, or something in-between—rather than using the more common silent and/or private reading model. This single conclusion had important implications for understanding Mark's portrait of Jesus, especially with regard to his relationship to God and David, a portrait I have called, “*kyriotic sonship*.”

Cognitive scientists support Quintilian's arguments that listening to a text in performance is more demanding upon the hearer than silent reading. Distractions from within the performance space itself had to be managed and attention to the ongoing narrative had to be maintained in order to track with the story. Approaching Mark's Gospel as a text for public reading also suggested the need for attention to the rhetorical strategies common in the orally-oriented first-century Roman culture.

To that end, this study presented five common categories of figures and other tactics that were designed to invite, even encourage, inference generation: intentional omission, *emphasis*, irony, appropriation and reversal, and allusion. While more figures could have been discussed, these devices were undoubtedly the most important since they formed a basis from which to understand the others—including question and answer, disclosure of secret information, and open-ended comparisons (*synkrisis*). These figures, prized in the first-century rhetorical culture of the Roman world, left certain

information unclear, whether specific information was omitted (intentional omission), made intentionally ambiguous (*emphasis*), misdirected (irony), granted and then subverted (appropriation and reversal), or cloaked in a cryptic and subtle comparison (*synkristic* allusion). Regardless of the path taken, the destination was ultimately the same: audience members were prompted to discover meaning on their own. This intentionally less direct approach aimed at convincing listeners more effectively than explicit statements could manage.<sup>1</sup> Mark's Gospel also leveraged testimony, a rather explicit tool, to support these figures.

A host of testimonies from witnesses ancient and recent, human and divine buttressed Mark's portrait of Jesus by giving the audience specific proclamations to assist in the interpretation of the allusive figures peppered throughout the narrative. In Mark's Gospel, allusive figured speech and testimony work together as narrative forms of Quintilian's darts that lodged into the minds of audience members.<sup>2</sup> These "darts," one direct, the other less than straightforward, complement each other in ways that prompted inferences that ultimately led to the conclusion that Mark's Jesus was the *kyriotic* Son. The bulk of this study offered a detailed explanation of the mechanics of that progressively unfolding portrayal, and the remainder of this section details its conclusions.

The beginning of Mark's Gospel most nearly approximates the "dramatic prologue" (πρόλογος). This specific subset of narrative beginnings provided a preview of the subject matter in order to prepare audience members for what was to come. In Mark's Gospel, audience members were exposed to the roots of *kyriotic* sonship through the use of allusive language, *emphasis*, and *testimonia*, all of which formed Davidic and divine *synkristic* relationships for Mark's Jesus. These tantalizing clues from the narrative's beginning were repeatedly activated later throughout the story, as *kyriotic* sonship was progressively unfolded.

While much was left in the shadows in Mark's prologue, the connections with David and God are made relatively clear by (1) the use of the term Χριστός in 1:1 and the use of *emphasis* with κύριος in 1:3 (cf. 1:9). Even from the opening lines of the Gospel, Mark's Jesus was the *kyriotic* Son, even if in an inchoate form. The prologue thereby taught the audience how to think about Jesus, offering tantalizing clues that they were expected to use in order to understand the story's protagonist as they progressed throughout the narrative. It was noted that Davidic and divine schemas—and not, say, those related to Moses or the Isaianic servant—were the ones found in the prologue. While

1 E.g., Demetrius, *Eloc.* 222.

2 Cf. Quintilian, *Inst.* 9.2.75.

other schemas and scripts were used later in the Gospel to inform the characterization of Mark's Jesus, they served a supplementary role to schemas and scripts associated with God and David.

The testimony from the narrator in the incipit used titles for Mark's Jesus that, for some, probably connoted images of a royal, ideal Davidic king or messiah. But υἱὸς θεοῦ, for others, activated the ubiquitous scripts associated with the emperor, "god" and "son of god." Divinity was a gradient of honor and status in the first-century milieu of Mark's Gospel, and the application of υἱὸς θεοῦ to Jesus immediately places him somewhere on that spectrum. However, the prior activation of Davidic scripts by the use of Χριστός may have been enough for many to tip the scales (even if non-consciously) in favor of a Davidic rendering of υἱὸς θεοῦ. Once the incipit was finished, the prologue's characterization of Mark's Jesus was thoroughly imbued with Jewish scripts; the testimonies given by "Isaiah" and John (ὁ κύριος [1:2–3] and ὁ ἰσχυρότερός [1:7], respectively) continued the insinuations that Mark's Jesus would not be a traditional ideal king, but one characterized as both Davidic and divine. Further, the tripartite divine testimony offered at the baptism provided supporting evidence for this characterization, acting as a stamp of divine approval on the cryptic portrait of Jesus thus far (1:10–11). There, the God of Israel testified on behalf of the narrator that Jesus was truly "son" according to the prologue, even casting the anointing of the Spirit in terms of the Hellenistic notion of divine possession by the Spirit that descended *into* him. Immediately (εὐθύς) after his baptism, this Spirit-possessed Jesus was forced into the wilderness in a way that portrayed him as an agent for the renewal of creation.

However, the temporal flow of the prologue did not allow for extended reflection on the part of the audience; nevertheless the Davidic and divine dimensions of the characterization of Mark's Jesus were brought before audience members as early as the prologue. This narrative beginning provided fertile soil from which the seeds of Markan characterization of Jesus developed over the course of the narrative. While little was clear or explicit in Mark 1:1–13, the audience was given reason to believe that the actions once reserved for both the God of Israel and his son, the Davidic Messiah, could now be attributed to Mark's Jesus. Only time would reveal to what degree and in what ways these seemingly mutually exclusive roles co-existed in the *kyriotic* sonship of the enigmatic man who came from Nazareth for John's baptism.

After leaving the prologue, the audience immediately encountered episodes bolstered by those elements of *kyriotic* sonship only latent in the narrative's beginning. The earlier chapters offered hints to the divine, "*kyriotic*," elements of the portrait of Mark's Jesus, which were often described using language usually reserved for God. The result was that internal scripts of the assimilation

of Mark's Jesus to Yahweh, initially embedded in Mark 1:3 (cf. 1:1) were primed, activated, and selected for sense making throughout the narrative. Mark's Jesus was hailed as the "Holy One of God" (1:24), after which he forgave a man his sins from his own authority as the "Son of Humanity" (2:5), behavior explicitly linked to activity reserved for "the one God" (2:7). Moments later in the performance, in the same breath that first explicitly connected him with David (2:25), the Markan Jesus offered testimony that, as the "Son of Humanity," he was "Lord" (2:28). It was as this "Lord,"<sup>3</sup> that the Markan Jesus cast out demons and healed the sick (1:21–28; 2:1–12; 3:7–12; 5:1–20). Audience members who had divine scripts and Davidic ones initially activated by the therapeutic activity will have most likely inferred that the Markan Jesus far outstrips David and Solomon, if the Davidic scripts were even consciously considered. The Markan Jesus exercised similar authority over stormy waves (4:35–41), fed his people as Yahweh had in the wilderness (6:30–44), strode upon the sea itself (6:45–52), and even conversed with Elijah and Moses in God's place on the new Sinai (9:2–13).

The result was that audience members were slowly and subtly guided into understanding Mark's Jesus as *synkristically* assimilated to God, while likewise avoiding the erroneous and simplistic equation of the two figures. In other words, the resistance of Jesus to God-associations significantly delimited the *kyriotic* implications of the rhetoric of inference. The narrative placement of both 10:17–22 and 12:28–34 was important since each episode fell after and before (respectively) episodes that strongly depicted the Markan Jesus in *kyriotic* dimensions. So, while the evangelist did not provide a theological "category" for the narrative's characterization of Jesus, the narrative does show concern that audience members not equate the two.

In terms of the *synkristic* assimilation to David, the narrative has thus far focused attention on the streams of tradition associated with the installment of the Davidic king, without adopting the concomitant political connotations (8:27–33; 11:1–11; 12:35–37; cf. 1:11). By avoiding the political ramifications of Davidic sonship, the narrative might provide comfort for audience members hearing the Gospel in the wake of the destruction of Jerusalem—and provide a modicum of deniability should anyone infer that Gospel was anti-Roman.<sup>4</sup>

3 The use of κύριος for the Markan Jesus began in 1:3 (see Chapter Three above); however, we saw above that various other titles, especially those used by demons (1:24; 3:11; 5:7), will likely have activated divine scripts, as well. In addition, it was in a scene in which he acts as the "one God," forgiving sins, that he restores mobility to a man with paralysis, and it was as κύριος that he exorcises the Legion from the man at Gerasa (5:1–20).

4 See further "To What Ends the Rhetoric of Inference?" below.



Offering more structure, explicit references to David bracket the entire section, which underscore the more latent portraits (2:23–28; 12:35–37). Finally, previously suppressed scripts related to David's healing and exorcistic activity would have been reliably selected by audience members via the testimony of blind Bartimaeus, which retroactively shaded the entire ministry of Mark's Jesus as broadly "Davidic." By slowly and steadily building the Davidic portrait, from subtle hints in the prologue to explicit testimony in 10:46–52 and 12:35–37, audience members are given the opportunity to come to the narrative's stance on their own. Rather than stating the matter outright, the narrative takes the shrewder and more rhetorically effective route afforded by allusive language, *emphasis*, and rhetorical questions.

The divine and Davidic streams of *kyriotic* sonship are embedded in the prologue and progressively developed, sometimes in overlapping contexts (cf. 2:23–28; 11:1–11; 12:35–37), as the narrative approaches Jerusalem. Each episode provides another opportunity for audience members to reevaluate the characterization of Mark's Jesus in light of new hints and clues, but also based on previous insinuations and inferences. Once the narrative arrives at the healing of Bartimaeus, these twin *synkristic* relationships begin to intersect more explicitly. By the time the audience reaches the "son of David question," both aspects of *kyriotic* sonship are ideally now embedded in the working memories of audience members. Thus, rather than rejecting Davidic sonship, Mark 12:35–37 primarily functions to place the issue of the *kyriotic* and Davidic aspects of *kyriotic* sonship before listeners for closer reflection.

We also find testimonies, some more explicit than others, used as scaffolding throughout the entire narrative, which foreground Mark's Jesus as "son." While the terminology was not static, the perlocutionary force was fixed on the confirmation of divine and Davidic sonship (3:11; 8:29; 9:7), a confirmation, which was embedded in the testimony of the narrator (1:1) and the divine voice at the baptism (1:11). Other testimonies pepper the narrative, some of which primed or activated the *synkristic* assimilation to Yahweh (1:24; 2:28; 5:19–20), while others did the same for the *synkristic* assimilation to David (8:29; 10:47–48); Mark 12:35–37 probably activated both in succession. The result is that these *testimonia* upheld the narrational portrait resulting from words and actions in the story itself, offering shape to the overall picture of Mark's Jesus as the *kyriotic* Son. Yet, the inner-workings of this portrait of *kyriotic* sonship had remained unexplored in the Gospel as the Markan Jesus enters his passion. However, all of this was about to change. After approximately an hour of preparation in performance, audience members were now prepared to experience the dramatic response to the question, "David calls him 'Lord,' so in what way is he his 'son'?"

The passion presented a response to the question, “David calls him ‘Lord,’ so in what way is he his ‘son’?” (12:37). It turned out that David’s Lord underwent pain, abandonment, mockery, and was enthroned as David’s “son” upon the cross. The high priest’s question, coupled with the Markan Jesus’s response, activated the narrative portrait of Mark’s Jesus as God’s son, a royal Davidic messiah who eschewed political power, opting instead for enthronement on the cross, power in weakness, and victory in defeat (14:61–62).

This royal portrait was likewise bolstered by Pilate’s question—co-opted as testimony by the evasive and *emphatic* response of the Markan Jesus—and the doubly ironic coronation from the Roman soldiers (15:2–20). This derision was appropriated and reversed by the narrative, which granted the mistreatment, but co-opted it as confirmation of the true (from Mark’s perspective) Davidic kingship of Jesus, rather than a refutation of it. After the David’s Lord took his throne as David’s “son” on the cross, God offered his own testimony confirming the portrait by insinuating his own grief over the death of his son in a manner that activated the host of scripts of portents at the deaths of heroes, emperors, and others with claim to some level of divinity (15:33, 38). The symbolic destruction of the old temple through the divine tearing of the temple’s curtain confirmed the “false” testimony that Mark’s Jesus would destroy the temple made with hands and build another not made with hands (15:38; cf. 14:58).

Perhaps most important for the portrait of *kyriotic* sonship in the passion was the fact that the Markan Jesus’s final words were not his own, but rather the words from a psalm of individual lament attributed to David: *ἐλωι ἐλωι λεμα σαβαχθαν*; (15:34). In his final words, the Markan Jesus cried out in the voice that, for some, would have been attributed David vis-à-vis Ps 21 LXX. To Jesus’s Davidic testimony, the narrator added the testimony of a Gentile, a Roman centurion, that this shattered and broken man from Nazareth was none other than God’s son. By climactically situating this testimony at the end of the passion, this ostensibly humiliating end to the Markan Jesus’s life formed the crowning confirmation of his *kyriotic* sonship.

The Gospel that began with testimony also closed with one (16:6–7; cf. 1:1–3). The physical appearance of the angelic young man connoted David’s now exalted Lord, together with the testimony he offered as a divine messenger, would have been naturally received as confirming the portrait of *kyriotic* sonship. Audience members were then left to decide whether they would respond to angelic testimony regarding the resurrection, with its attendant commission to proclaim this resurrected Jesus. For those tracking with the narrative from the prologue to passion, this testimony provided the crowning

confirmation of Mark's Jesus as the *kyriotic* Son—David's Lord, enthroned as David's "son" and finally exalted to the right hand of God (cf. 12:35–37).

### Functions of the Rhetoric of Inference

As discussed briefly in Chapter Two, the rhetoric of inference was used in antiquity for a variety of reasons. Speaking principally of *emphasis*, Quintilian held that allusive language could and should be used when the subject matter and/or context deemed plain language unsafe, unseemly, or generally unwise at a rhetorical level (*Inst.* 9.2.67–99). These three reasons—safety, decorum, and rhetorical force—provide a fruitful starting point for further discussion of the rationale for the rhetoric of inference used in the characterization of *kyriotic* sonship. While the historical situatedness of potential issues of safety (and to a lesser degree, decorum) means that a detailed investigation of these options falls outside the present study's focus on the text-as-performed, a few reflections are nevertheless in order.

The rhetoric of inference could have been leveraged because speaking openly about *kyriotic* sonship was deemed unsafe or unseemly. It would not be difficult to imagine mounting concern with aligning Jesus to David in any substantive manner since such associations could be understood in a revolutionary manner: "Others claimed to be a Davidic heir and look how Rome responded!" This could be the case even if the parties involved did not envision a violent revolution. In the decade following the Roman destruction of the Jerusalem temple, it would be surprising if a royal Davidic figure were *not* experienced at least to some degree as a challenge to the emperor: the "King of the Jews" vs. the "King of Rome." If so, the rhetoric of inference would allow plausible deniability while also providing a rhetorically savvy presentation of Jesus as that Davidic king that not only challenged the Roman emperor, but also subtly augmented honorable behavior for a king. Similarly, concerns with monotheism in most Jewish sectors could understandably give rise to hesitations about characterizing Jesus too explicitly as a divine being. For those audience members predisposed against a presentation of Jesus that encroached on monotheism, keeping the divine contours of the characterization rather implicit could be rhetorically more productive because it allowed the power of the story to work under the radar of audience members' counterarguments.

Of course, concerns for safety and decorum typically—though not exclusively—manifest in juridical contexts, when the judge's inclinations must be taken into account in order to optimize rhetorical effectiveness. Further,

given the inevitably tendentious nature of any detailed discussion of provenance and/or purpose for the Markan narrative, any conclusions regarding potential concerns for safety and/or decorum must remain tentative. The present focus on the performance event—with its ever-shifting audience and social context—further complicates matters: what feels unsafe in front of one group might seem perfectly fine in another context, and what would offend one audience might be completely suitable for another. Thus, we cannot have much certainty with regard to a concern for safety or decorum as a motivation for the rhetoric of inference surrounding *kyriotic* sonship. Nevertheless, such a motivation cannot be ruled out—especially considering the cognitive research discussed in Chapter Two. Moreover, one need not posit an *actual* threat of persecution, whether Jewish or Roman, for the motivation of “safety” or “decorum” to stand. All that is necessary would be for the author or audience to feel unsafe or, for whatever reason, opt for a less direct approach given his or her social setting. Rome need not care about Mark’s Gospel one way or another since the concern for safety is not always embedded in viable threats, but rather in the eye of the beholder.

Concern for rhetorical force and style may likewise have prompted the cunning, less direct figurative language. Indeed, given the narrative development in the characterization of Mark’s Jesus demonstrated across Chapters Three to Six, this motivation seems exceptionally likely, whether or not safety or decorum played secondary roles. As we saw in Chapter Two, concern for audience participation was paramount, and rhetorical elegance was a primary way of accomplishing this important aim of oral delivery.

For Quintilian, the most sophisticated way to express oneself more elegantly was to refer to one thing by alluding to another (*Inst.* 9.2.97).<sup>5</sup> Both irony and *emphasis* are mentioned in this context, even those forms based on a single word. Recalling the discussion of allusive verbal innuendo in Demetrius’s *On Style* from Chapter Two, words, sentences, and entire passages were considered more forceful when that power was produced by the audience’s engagement with the words themselves, rather than an authorial comment.<sup>6</sup> As with intentional omission, allusive language allowed the audience to believe they discovered the meaning on their own, which made them all the more favorable to the presentation at hand (*Eloc.* 222).

The rhetoric of inference was frequently used in non-judicial contexts and across genres. It was as at home in Vergil’s *Aeneid* as in Chariton’s *Chaereas*

5 Sed eruditissimum longe, si per aliam rem alia indicetur.

6 *Eloc.* 288.

and *Callirhoe*.<sup>7</sup> In these contexts, it was more often than not motivated by concern for rhetorical force, rather than fear for safety or decorum. When this datum is joined with its particular progressive development in the Markan narrative, the conclusion becomes highly likely that the ultimate goal of these subtle tactics was the improvement of rhetorical force.<sup>8</sup> In other words, Mark's rhetoric of inference was designed to bait audience members into slowly and steadily inferring the *kyriotic* sonship of Jesus on their own. As we saw in Chapter Two, this indirect means of persuasion fits exceptionally well with the story medium, which itself lowers the guards of audience members so that they are less resistant to the narrative's rhetoric.

Given the ultimate aim of heightened persuasiveness, it is not insignificant that the rhetoric of inference progressively unveils *kyriotic* sonship from the baptism of Mark's Jesus to his passion, slowly but surely aiding audience inference with subtle clues and hints along the way. This buildup corresponds roughly to the hiddenness of the characterization within the narrative itself. As we saw in Chapter Three, some in the audience would have inferred that Mark's Jesus walked the earth as a god-in-disguise, beginning at his baptism (cf. 1:9–11). These audience members would have been confirmed in this conviction by their experience of the revelation of Mark's Jesus when he was transfigured on a high mountain (9:2–8). If the divine dimension of his characterization was veiled from nearly all human characters in the story world, this portrait was slowly revealed to listeners through the rhetoric of inference. When combined with key uses of testimony, these disclosures created an intense audience-elevating effect, which helped win over listeners to the narrative's portrait of Jesus vis-à-vis the liking effect.<sup>9</sup> That is, disclosing information to another party encourages that person or persons to feel closer to, or more affinity for, the discloser, a phenomenon that is present in small group settings as well as interpersonal relationships.<sup>10</sup>

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7 See further Chapter Two above.

8 In point of fact, even in instances in which safety or decorum were motivations, these concerns ultimately served the primary goal of improving rhetorical force; an offended or violent audience is not easily persuaded!

9 For further discussion of the liking effect in the context of the audience-elevating impact of the secrecy motif in Mark's Gospel, see Kelly R. Iverson, "Wherever the Gospel Is Preached: The Paradox of Secrecy in the Gospel of Mark," in *Mark as Story: Retrospect and Prospect*, ed. Kelly R. Iverson and Christopher W. Skinner (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 203–08.

10 See further Michael H. Kahn and Kjell E. Rudestam, "The Relationship between Liking and Perceived Self-Disclosure in Small Groups," *The Journal of Psychology* 78 (1971): 81–85; Nancy L. Collins and Lynn Carol Miller, "Self-Disclosure and Liking: A Meta-Analytic

These figures and tactics offered more than sufficient hints for sympathetic audience members to deduce *kyriotic* sonship over the course of the narrative, even if later reflection was needed in some cases to understand the import of some details in certain scenes. But if Mark's Jesus is the *kyriotic* Son, what more can be said of his characterization in relation to David and God? While we have touched on this matter throughout the pages of the study, this final section offers a focused summary.

### Unpacking *Kyriotic* Sonship

While the specific configurations of the portrait of Mark's Jesus as the *kyriotic* Son will have varied from person to person among the audience, certain common aspects, based on the broad insinuations of the narrative, create a basic and consistent portrait worth reviewing in the final pages of the study. These elements are usually internal to the story, but some are filled out with schemas and scripts ubiquitous in Jewish and Greco-Roman culture.

*Kyriotic* sonship is predominantly comprised of a combination of scripts associated with God and David, though in the chapters above, we found reason to suspect that scripts associated with Moses and the Isaianic servant would also be activated for some audience members. While the divine and Davidic dimensions of *kyriotic* sonship were sometimes difficult to disentangle from each other in Mark's characterization of Jesus, especially owing to the rhetoric of inference, we separate them here for heuristic purposes. Given their prominent role in the study, the focus here is on the schemas and scripts associated with David and Yahweh as they relate to Mark's Jesus. We begin with Mark's Jesus as the Davidic heir par excellence.

#### *David's Son*

While the Markan narrative shows no concern for a physical lineage with David, allusive language, testimony, *emphasis*, irony, and the like were all leveraged to characterize Mark's Jesus as "Davidic" in a thoroughgoing manner that, despite its pervasiveness, scholars have tended to overlook. Davidic sonship is not something left to later gospels, like Matthew and Luke. Rather, from the opening lines of Mark's Gospel, Jesus is described using allusive language for the *Davidic* messiah, who was the ideal king ("son") of God's people (1:1).

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Review," *Psychological Bulletin* 116 (1994): 457–75; Daniel T. Gilbert, Susan T. Fiske, and Gardner Lindzey, *The Handbook of Social Psychology*, 5th ed. (Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley, 2010), 870–71.

From the very beginning of the narrative, Jesus is presented in ways that could reasonably be taken as a challenge to the emperor. This aspect of his characterization culminated in the passion, which depicted Mark's Jesus as a rather unexpected king—one whose power was manifest in weakness and abandonment. Like David, he was abandoned by his friends and reviled by his enemies, mocked, spit upon, and derided. Also like David, he would reign on a throne over God's people, but his throne would be a wooden cross—at least initially. Ultimately, he would be enthroned at God's right hand (cf. 10:37–40; 12:35–37; 15:25–28; 16:1–8). These ironically royal aspects of Davidic sonship are just as important for understanding the relationship of Mark's Jesus to David as the more overt tactics, such as the divine testimonies at his baptism (1:10) and transfiguration (9:7) or Peter's testimony at the story's turning point (8:29).

It is difficult to miss the import of such a circumspect presentation of Davidic sonship in a text composed during a period of relative unrest for Christians in the Roman Empire. The reframing of suffering, mistreatment, and humiliation as honorable instead of dishonorable—to say nothing of the divine vindication of their Davidic king—would find particular currency among audience members who felt mistreated during or after the destruction of the temple. Thus, while the royal aspects of Davidic sonship are adopted by Mark's characterization and the political ramifications are muffled by his tacit refusal of power, there remains a strong current of imperial resistance in the portrayal of Mark's Jesus as a Davidic king.

Yet, the Davidic aspects of *kyriotic* sonship are not limited to the ironic kingly reign of Mark's Jesus. They also extend to his therapeutic activity, which demonstrated his dominion over illness, infirmity, and the supranatural world (cf. 10:46–52), even if those powers were more directly related to his assimilation to Yahweh (cf. 1:9–11; 1:21–28; 2:1–12; 3:7–12; 5:1–20). Since Jesus's therapeutic activity was explicitly connected to David in the Gospel's final healing episode, the entirety of the foregoing healing activity was shaded with Davidic tones even for those audience members for whom these schemas, scripts, and themes associated with God-as-healer had been previously used for sense making in therapeutic episodes. Moreover, by waiting until past the midpoint of the narrative to offer an explicit affirmation of Davidic sonship,<sup>11</sup> the narrative provides each audience member with an extended opportunity to arrive at this conclusion in his or her own time and own way. Thus, by the time they are greeted by Bartimaeus's direct affirmation, the testimony ought to confirm their suspicions rather than bear the burden of convincing them.

11 Peter's confession does provide testimony of the Markan Jesus's Davidic messiahship, but not in terms as explicit as Bartimaeus's cries.



The fact that some scholars have taken the relative lack of direct attention to Davidic sonship as evidence for its absence is not without irony. For example, working from her observation that Mark's Jesus never *directly* affirms Davidic sonship, Malbon writes that, "Rejection of the application of 'Son of David' to the Christ is the *obvious conclusion* of the Markan Jesus's citation and interpretation of Psalm 110:1 [109:1 LXX]."<sup>12</sup> But what is obvious is subject to the eye of the beholder, and for many ancient hearers the rhetoric of inference very likely carried along the Davidic portrait through clever use of ambiguity, allusion, and *emphasis* beginning with the incipit. The subtle development of the Davidic contours of *kyriotic* sonship highlights the rhetorical sophistication of the narrative, whose author seems to display too much respect for audience members to make everything obvious.<sup>13</sup>

### *David's Lord*

While Mark's Jesus was immediately cast as the Davidic son in the prologue, this portrait was imbued with *kyriotic* dimensions in the same breath. Not only would the title υἱὸς θεοῦ from the incipit probably activate schemas for divine beings for many in the audience (1:1), but the testimony drawn from "Isaiah" leveraged *emphasis* on κύριος to suggest that Mark's Jesus shared a special connection with the God of Israel (1:3).

While appropriating titles, actions, and attributes of gods and goddesses was not at all uncommon in the broader Greco-Roman world,<sup>14</sup> it was far less common in more Jewish sectors. In Mark's Gospel, however, there is no sign of pulling back from characterizing Jesus as a divine being. He forgives sins on his own initiative and heals the sick (2:1–12), cleanses the land of unclean spirits (1:21–28; 3:7–12; 5:1–20), calms the stormy sea (4:35–41), feeds his people in the wilderness with miraculous food (6:30–44), strides upon the waves (6:45–52), and uses the divine name as a self-identification on two occasions (6:50; 14:62). Moreover, the narrative seemed at pains to point audience members toward the assimilation of Mark's Jesus to Yahweh through the use

12 Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, *Mark's Jesus: Characterization as Narrative Christology* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2009), 159 (emphasis added); cf. 87–92. For further engagement with Malbon on Davidic sonship, see Chapters Four and Five above.

13 Recall the comments of Demetrius, who echoes Theophrastus in his *Eloc.* 222: "To tell your listener every detail as though he were a fool seems to judge him as such" (τὸ δὲ πάντα ὡς ἀνοήτῳ λέγειν καταγινώσκοντι ἔοικεν τοῦ ἀκροατοῦ). See further Chapter Two above.

14 E.g., This is a common feature of the characterization of heroes on the Greek epic tradition. Note that Odysseus' wisdom is likened to that of Zeus himself and Patroclus's appearance to Ares throughout the *Iliad*. The same can be said of Callirhoe, who is routinely mistaken for Aphrodite in Chariton's famous novel.

of *emphasis* on κύριος,<sup>15</sup> as well as through allusive language associated with Yahweh from Jewish cultural memory,<sup>16</sup> throughout the narrative.

Mark's Jesus is functionally equivalent to Yahweh throughout the narrative. As we saw above, many audience members will probably have considered Mark's Jesus a divine being from his baptism, walking the earth in disguise as he carried out his work among mortals. Gods and goddesses regularly performed such tasks and their descent to earth was commonly marked by the flight of a bird (cf. 1:9–11). Moreover, audience members were given a glimpse “behind” this human disguise at the transfiguration where Mark's Jesus was presented in a way that would have sparked images of divinity in the minds of many (cf. 9:2–13).

Yet the narrative leaves no room for speculation that Mark's Jesus is literally Yahweh himself. It makes that abundantly clear with the protagonist's own conclusion that “no one is good except ‘the one God’” (10:19), along with its own focused attention on the oneness of God in the *Shema* (12:28–33). Further, the placement of these episodes in contexts that otherwise support a thoroughly divine portrait (esp. 12:35–37) suggest that the author was hedging the *kyriotic* portrait by qualifying that the characterization of Mark's Jesus as Yahweh was not meant to be taken as completely literal, in much the same way as Mark's Jesus was not *literally* David, despite his assimilation to David.

However, it must be kept in mind that Mark's Gospel is not nearly as concerned with theological categories as some modern theologians. Instead, it utilized an amalgamation of first-century conceptions of the divine, both from Hellenistic scripts and those sourced from more Jewish streams of tradition. Mark shows no discomfort whatsoever in portraying the death of a human-turned-god-in-disguise who defers at every opportunity to Israel's “one God.”

As with the Davidic side of *kyriotic* sonship, the depiction of Jesus as “Lord” and “son of God” within its first-century milieu would surely be experienced by some as a challenge to Roman imperial authority. If Mark's Jesus was viewed as a divine being, it was likely as one in competition with Rome's own divine emperor.<sup>17</sup>

15 See on 1:3; 2:28; 5:19; 11:3 in Chapter Two above. Cf. 7:28 and 12:9, both of which seem to leverage polyvalency on κύριος, though in different ways. Unfortunately, space constraints prevented extensive treatment.

16 See on 4:35–41; 6:30–52; 9:2–13.

17 See Michael Peppard, *The Son of God in the Roman World: Divine Sonship in Its Social and Political Context* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

### *Summary of Kyriotic Sonship*

Put succinctly then, Mark's Jesus is the *kyriotic* Son inasmuch as he embodies the royal hopes surrounding a Davidic ruler and healer, who performs these same activities (and more) as a god-in-disguise. Functionally, Mark's Jesus is characterized as though he were the embodiment of both Yahweh and his Davidic Messiah. This union of the divine and Davidic creates a characterization for audience members in which the Markan Jesus far surpasses anything known in Jewish cultural memory aside from Yahweh himself. The result is that, for sympathetic audience members, the Markan narrative creates its own scripts and forms its own cultural memory, in which Jesus is assimilated to both David and God as a divine and suffering messiah.<sup>18</sup>

Moreover, the strained tensions between Rome and Jerusalem in the latter part of the first century raised alert levels and concerns for decades after. Following an explicitly political Davidic king as "Lord" during this period would presumably have left communities vulnerable to scorn or worse. Leaving much of *kyriotic* sonship tucked away for audience members to infer on their own deposited a potentially useful measure of plausible deniability while simultaneously using a more rhetorically powerful approach. Moreover, for those interested in doing so, following a divine Davidic king as a leader—who suffered and was subsequently vindicated by God—could provide substantial comfort in cases where they were called upon to give their lives for their king and his message. For these Jesus followers, the *kyriotic* Son would prove an ideal model to emulate in the hope for ultimate vindication.

### **Final Remarks**

In the pages and chapters above, this study has offered a "hearing" of Mark's Jesus by addressing the matter of his relationship to David and God from the vantage point of the rhetoric of inference in an oral delivery of the Gospel. This is by no means the only construal made available by the text of Mark's Gospel; as I wrote in the introduction, I am ultimately left with my own unique perspective as a white American male with a unique background and training, which results in a particular interdisciplinary approach with results uniquely my own. Yet my hope is that this particular rendering of Mark's Jesus generates discussion by introducing questions of Hellenistic rhetoric, performance, and

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18 On Mark's Gospel as cultural memory, see Kirsten Marie Hartvigsen, *Prepare the Way of the Lord: Towards a Cognitive Poetic Analysis of Audience Involvement with Characters and Events in the Markan World*, BZNW 180 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012), 85–87, 534–35.

cognitive science. If audiences *heard* texts that were written to convince them of a particular perspective, then it stands to reason that we need to exercise due diligence when it comes to the question of *how* these texts were read, how they were heard, and how they convinced audience members.

My focus was necessarily limited in this setting, but there are important and interesting avenues of research that await those so inclined. First, I have focused primarily on how predominately Jewish schemas may have formed audience impressions of Mark's Jesus. However, much would be gained by applying a similar approach to how non-Jewish Roman audience members might conceive of Mark's Jesus. Second, one might consider the role Greek stock characters may play in the characterization of Jesus and other characters in Mark's Gospel.<sup>19</sup> Third, one might focus particularly on the variety of audience emotions likely evoked by Mark's Gospel.<sup>20</sup> Fourth, one might also explore further the way the corporate dimension of the performance event augments the narrative experience of individual audience members. Fifth, we have seen that the performance setting makes it impossible for audience members to remain engaged in the narrative and also track detailed intertextuality. A fruitful project might therefore attend to how a cognitive and rhetorical approach both complicates and complements more traditional approaches to Mark's use of the LXX.<sup>21</sup> Sixth, more attention ought to be paid to anti-Imperial edges of *kyriotic* sonship.

When the lenses of performance, rhetoric, and cognitive science intersected at Mark's Jesus, the result was a characterization more Davidic and more divine—as well as more empirically-based—than others have articulated. While there was, to be sure, diversity surrounding audience impressions of Mark's Jesus, there were hints from the narrative that the Gospel's protagonist embodied the royal and therapeutic features associated with David and his coming heir—along with scripts that suggested that he walked the earth as a

19 See my "The Dissembler of John 3: A Cognitive and Rhetorical Approach to the Characterization of Nicodemus," *JBL* 135 (2016): 141–58. I am currently working on a monograph-length project detailing a cognitive approach to audience-oriented characterization, using Nicodemus in John's Gospel as a test case. See Michael R. Whinton, *Configuring Nicodemus: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Complex Characterization*, LNTS (London: T&T Clark, projected 2018).

20 E.g., see my "Feeling the Silence: A Moment-by-Moment Account of Emotions at the End of Mark (16:1–8)," *CBQ* 79 (2016): 272–89.

21 For such a study in Matthew's Gospel, see Kelly R. Iverson, "An Enemy of the Gospel? Anti-Paulinisms and Intertextuality in the Gospel of Matthew," in *Unity and Diversity in the Gospels and Paul: Essays in Honor of Frank J. Matera*, ed. Christopher W. Skinner and Kelly R. Iverson, *SBLCL* 7 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012), 7–32.

human-turned-god-in-disguise. Indeed the rhetoric of inference suggests that, while Mark's Jesus was not literally God himself, he was characterized in a way that encouraged his assimilation into Jewish cultural memory of Yahweh, even as he was assimilated to David. While modern scholars have trended toward confusion concerning how the Davidic and divine aspects of the characterization of Mark's Jesus might hold together, this study has suggested a plausible and empirically-grounded answer to the question, "David himself calls him 'Lord,' so in what way is he his 'son'?" may be summed up in two words: *kyriotic* sonship.

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